

# messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 37 – Number 11

March 2020

**In This Issue in the Boatshops**

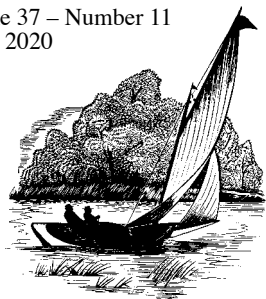
Build a Boat of Your Own  
Make Your Own Canoe Paddle  
Building a Jericho Bay Lobster Skiff  
Dancing Chicken – The Building of *Helge*  
Peapod Build Resumes – One Sailor's Midlife Crisis  
The View from Almost Canada – From the Tiki Hut



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## In This Issue...

- 2 Commentary
- 3 Harkening Back With Harvey
- 4 You write to us about...
- 5 Book Review
- 6 RAID Finland
- 8 *Dinghy Cruising: The Lifeboat Disaster of 1886*
- 14 Sea Stories & Tall Tales
- 15 Epitaph for Larry's Boat
- 16 Our Coast Guard in Action
- 20 Over the Horizon
- 22 Build a Boat of Your Own
- 25 Building a Jericho Bay Lobster Skiff
- 26 Make Your Own Canoe Paddle
- 29 *Dancing Chicken*
- 30 The Building of *Helge*: Part 7
- 33 Peapod Build Resumes: Part 2
- 34 One Sailor's Midlife Crisis
- 35 A Penobscot Canoe
- 35 N.C. Wyeth Studio & Art
- 36 The View from AlmostCanada
- 39 From the Tiki Hut
- 40 Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
- 42 In Memoriam: Robert Jerden Whittier
- 43 33 Years Ago in *MAIB*: Seamaster Boats
- 46 *Light Feather*
- 47 Monument River Wherry
- 48 Perfect
- 49 Methods for Epoxy Coating on All Sides
- 50 Phil Bolger & Friends on Design: Skimmer Planing Utility
- 52 Ship's Log
- 53 From the Lee Rail
- 54 Trade Directory
- 58 Classified Marketplace
- 59 Shiver Me Timbers



## Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

The coming spring (it's almost here) promises to be a special one for those who are into traditional small craft, for in late June at the WoodenBoat Show at Mystic Seaport, the annual John Gardner Small Craft Workshop will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. Yep, it's been a half century since John Gardner sounded the alarm about the safety advocates in the USCG proposed testing of long established seaworthy traditional small craft to see if they were safe enough to be permitted to be built and used. John, who had only recently assumed his long time role as Mystic Seaport's small craft guru, called together those who would be affected, designers, builders and users, to become advocates of the proven worth of the boats they loved. Hundreds turned up, it was a major affair considering that it was, in effect, a call for "individualists to unite."

The goal of protecting our beloved traditional small craft from the safety mavens was achieved and so we continue today, after now 50 years, to enjoy these boats, while the momentum from that gathering became the annual Small Craft Workshop at Mystic, eventually being named after John in recognition of his efforts on our collective behalf. The aptly named local John Gardner Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association is organizing a special workshop this year, see the announcement on page 4. Many details will appear in our next couple of issues about what you can expect to share should you choose to attend.

The Gardner Chapters' chief organizer, Bill Rutherford, sent me a book, *Backwaters\** (1979) by local (Noank, Connecticut) author Stephen Jones, which included a chapter, "Rowing Workshop" about his rowing (with a couple of companions) to the Small Craft Workshop from his home in nearby Noank. Jones, who operates Flat Hammock Press as well as writing his own books, has a practiced eye and ear for the quirks of small boat folks and his description of his visit to the Workshop in the '70s is a hoot.

I first attended this event just about when Jones published this book (I discussed more on my getting involved in the Novem-

ber issue) and recognized the personalities and activities Jones chronicles in this short 30 page chapter (I haven't had time yet to read the rest of the book, hadda get this Commentary done). His observations range across a broad population of small boat types attracted to the event. His viewpoint becomes apparent as one of an experienced small boat guy well beyond early enthusiasm.

His companions reflect this, one being "The Harbormaster, bacteriologist, wine maker, plumber, carpenter, collector of barns, shacks, eel skiffs, catboats, orphans, stray planks and empty rope spools, a bear with a brush cut and a beard, he stood, two oars clenched in his fist, fog dripping off his Dutch barge captain's hat." From this you can envision his opinions of the amateur small boat wannabe builders and users he will encounter at the Workshop, along with Seaport higher mucky mucks and the occasional hapless Seaport tourist visitor who happens upon the assemblage of strange looking and behaving (non tourist types) traditional small boat folks clustered at one spot by the ornate old NY Yacht Club building that at time was the focal point for the Workshop.

Jones has obvious respect for Gardner but it is not the idolatry of many of those attending. He has some fun with Gardner's Maine accent, but towards the end he quotes a remark from plain spoken John:

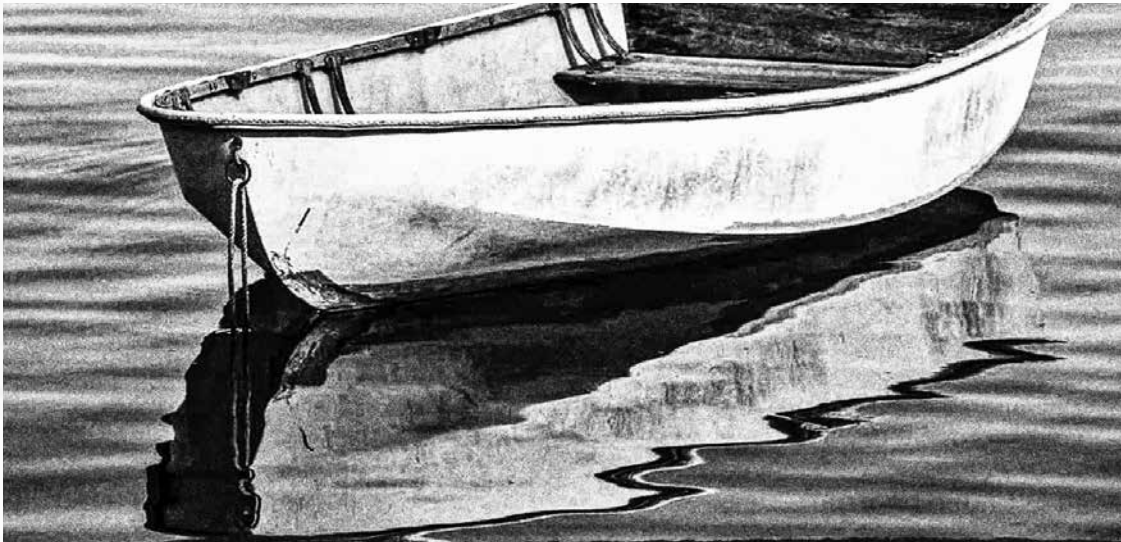
"Gardner himself had fallen into a rather melancholy mood. It had been a long weekend after long preparation. 'The problem of rot is more depressing, rather I mean pressing,' he said, 'more pressing here than anywhere else in the country. We've got so much tied up in these old hulks that were never meant to be around today. We've tried everything too. What happens? The bugs like the paint, they like the chemicals.' He looked out the door, his eyes dancing. 'The sad truth is: wood is meant to rot.'"

I leave you with this vignette and encourage you to join like minded traditional small craft folks in June at Mystic Seaport.

\*On Amazon, February 1: 15 used from \$2.97, 1 new from \$25.91, 1 collectible from \$25.

## On the Cover...

It's been a pretty easy winter around here on the Massachusetts "Noth Showah" for indoor shop time, our cover captures such a moment at Steve Lapey's Stevens Canoe Shop in nearby Groveland where a group of WCHA Norumbega Chapter guys have been restoring another vintage canoe to be raffled off come summer at the annual WCHA Assembly. While working alone in one's own boatshop has its charms, the fellowship that comes with group efforts such as at Steve's enhances the appeal and progress is amazingly fast!



## *Harkening Back With Harvey*

*"Small craft images from today as viewed through a long ago lens."*

*Images by Harvey Petersiel*

*Dinghy Daze*







# You write to us about...

## Projects...

### The *Sylvana Beal* Project

We are getting ready to get started on the *Beal* but not in a hurry. Presently we are cutting wood, getting the preservation plan, national historic register papers and plans to the Coast Guard submitted. We ordered most of the bronze and have purchased a pile of logs. It still may be a year from September until we lay the keel, but when we do we want to have everything we can done ahead of this so it is as smooth as possible to the water. Given that the *Beal* is our most ambitious project to date, it will be running on a wish and a prayer for quite some time, but you know I enjoy wishing and praying as much as I do hard work.

Harold Burnham, Essex, MA



## This Magazine...

### Loved Gateley's Article

We loved Susan Gateley's "Battery Powered Canal Crawl" in the January issue about boating and its history on Lake Ontario. Our old Lyman still calls the St Lawrence home. She is sound, not a leak.

Coleman and Susan Baker, Montpelier, VT

### Beach Ball Response

Flipping through my December issue I was totally surprised to see my decades younger self looking at me from its "25 Years Ago in *MAIB*" pages featuring "The Genesis of the Beach Ball" and "A Day in the Life of the Beach Ball." It was fun to reread the articles. We never did repeat that voyage on the Chester in the Beach Ball but reading that article brought memories of that day's sail back.

Just a few minutes ago, as I was writing this, I had a call from a reader in Indiana who was responding to my now 25-year-old "invitation to register" any sailing rig adaptations for the Beach Ball Class. He has hereby been granted Sail #002 for any attempts he makes.

Mark Fisher, Takoma Park, MD

### Bark Canoes & Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia Review

Thank you for the review of the soon to be published *Bark Canoes & Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia*. This book appears to be very valuable, probably filling a huge gap in knowledge about the indigenous watercraft of Siberia. It is scheduled for publication this May, I am looking forward to it.

Walter Giger, Wethersfield, CT

### Great Memories

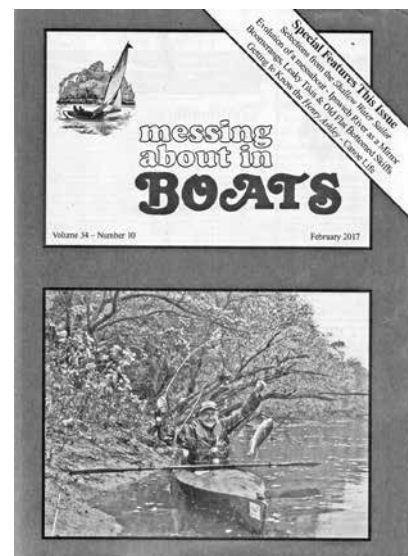
We appreciate the fine job you are doing, we especially enjoy the history articles that jog great memories. Keep on going!

Maureen and Steve Corkery, Shelter Island, NY

### Thanks for Thoughtful Cover

My 55-year-old son Mike, who has been my paddling buddy, was downed by a stroke last October. He is recovering, hopefully to rejoin me paddling again. You featured him on your February 2017 cover, for which we both thank you.

Bob McAuley, Woodbridge, IL



## 50th Anniversary John Gardner Small Craft Workshop 2020

At the Wooden Boat Show Mystic Seaport June 26-28

Scenes from Mystic Seaport Traditional Small Craft Workshop 1983





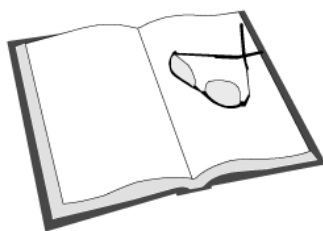
Unfortunately this one sat on my shelf, unread and therefore unreviewed, for some time. Unfortunate because Richard Wynne, the Grand Poohbah at Lodestar Books, that delightful publisher of “new and neglected nautical writing,” tells me this one is sold out/out of print and no indication of a reprint on the horizon. That is unfortunate for you as Amazon is listing it at or above three figures. Maybe a few requests from disappointed potential readers will shake loose a reprint. But before our review starts, a couple of caveats.

First, “blokes?” That perversion of the esteemed native language of Americans known as British English defines “bloke” as an ordinary male human being. Oliver and Lancashire are officers in the Royal Marines. Having served in the USMC, US Army Special Operations Command and as a civilian advisor in both Iraq and Afghanistan, I can confidently state that there isn’t a single “ordinary” person in the entirety of the Royal Marines (RM) organization.

The whole of the Royal Marines is considerably smaller than a single division of the USMC. Everyone in the RM is trained to the level of “special operations” in every other country’s militaries and cross trained in multiple specialties. Just basic training is over a year in duration. To top that off, the RM encourage and even grant time off for “adventuring,” as in going off to remote parts of the world and doing things that would scare the rest of us silly. More members of the RM have climbed Mt Everest than any other organization in the world, of any kind.

Kev Oliver came up with the idea of sailing and rowing the Northwest Passage in a small open boat, rather than joining a team that was going to row the Atlantic Ocean, because rowing the Atlantic just wasn’t quite enough. Ordinary guys just doesn’t describe Oliver and Lancashire.

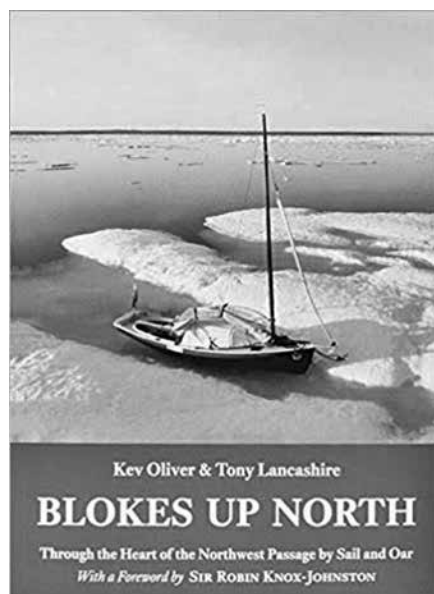
Another unusual part of this adventure is not just that they did it in a small boat, a Norseboat 17.5 in this case, it is that they did it without outside support. A few years previous the Passage was sailed by a catamaran but they had a support vessel along. The Norseboat was a special build with a raised floor to reduce water in the cockpit and give watertight storage and reinforced bow to avoid ice damage. They camped out aboard and on shore and utilized inflatable rollers to get off the water during gales. In effect they were camp cruising the most inhospitable shore in the northern hemisphere. They had a satphone



## Book Review

### *Blokes Up North Through the Heart of the Northwest Passage by Sail and Oar*

By Kev Oliver and Tony Lancashire  
Foreword by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston  
Lodestar Books, London 2014  
Reviewed by John Nystrom



and VHF to keep in contact with the Canadian Coast Guard and RM HQ, not that those are foolproof in that remote environment, a call

for rescue might not get help for days, if not weeks. They were truly on their own.

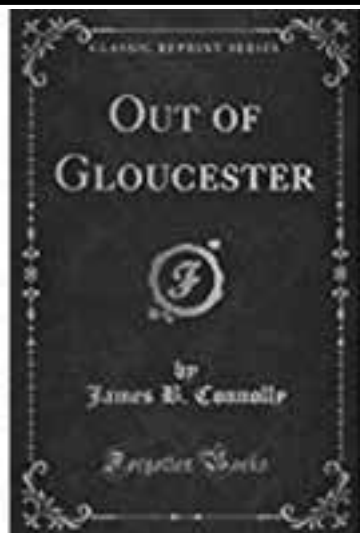
The format of the book is unusual because rather than editing the text into one voice, sections are marked as to which author is writing by an initial. Frankly, that approach is almost never really successful, but in this case it works fabulously. Two perspectives on events and honesty about their personal interactions is (actually) interesting, especially showing how different the two personalities were. Decision making is much discussed, as is emotional and physical state, but it doesn’t overwhelm the narrative and, though both have a history of both training and adventuring together, it doesn’t become a coded and only half discussed story where you have to read between the lines.

A week t rapped on the ice, depressed and frustrated early in the trip, gives insight into how conflict will be dealt with. Their effort to drag the boat ten miles over and around ice floes sets the tone for later frustrations, with adverse winds, that any sailor can relate to.

There is plenty of Arctic isolation but also contacts with others transiting the NWP, residents of the few communities they stopped at and marine and terrestrial wildlife. No plan survives “first contact with the enemy” and this expedition is no different. Extended easterly winds, as opposed to expected westerlies, led to an inability to complete the trip before ice season returned. The process of deciding to store the boat at a Canadian community halfway to their goal and return the next summer to complete the passage is a process every cruiser needs to read before their first voyage.

Almost everyone who writes about their Arctic travels has to mention previous expeditions, especially the ill fated Franklin Expedition. Given that a RM enlisted man was one of the first to die on that Victorian tragedy, it’s natural that the subject comes up, but again the authors avoid the fate of other books, becoming obsessed with history. I usually love any reference to history but in the case of many Arctic travelers’ tales, balance gets lost.

So to sum up, a balanced and well written “camp cruising” tale, in a harsh and potentially deadly locale, that deserves to be back in print. My copy is going to an old Army SF friend who wants to learn to sail and build a Goat Island Skiff. I’m hoping he doesn’t try to drag me off to the Northwest Passage.



### About Those James B. Connolly Books

Our recent publication of several stories about Gloucester schoonermen by James B. Connolly prompted some inquiries about more of his writings. Our resulting search revealed a number of titles, a search online will lead you to many still available.

A list we had of his titles from a 1940 book, *The Port of Gloucester*, turned up those at right:

It turns out there was a lot more to James B. Connolly than writing. An extensive bio of him on Wikipedia reveals he participated in the first modern Olympics in 1898, crewed in the 1st International Schooner Championship between Gloucester and Nova Scotia in 1920, ran for Congress twice (lost both times) and more. Look him up if he grabs your interest.

#### Historical

*The Port of Gloucester*  
*The Gloucester Fishermen Navy Men*

#### Short Stories (A Few of Over 200)

*Out o' Gloucester*  
*Deep Sea's Toll*  
*Wide Courses*  
*Crested Seas*  
*Head Winds*  
*Running Free*  
*Open Water*  
*Tide Rips*

*Sonnie Boy's People*

#### Novels (A Few of 25)

*The Seiners*  
*Jeb Hutton*  
*Hiker Joy*  
*Steel Decks*  
*Coaster Captain*  
*An Olympic Victor*

I'm a 30-year-old Estonian who loves her adventures and doesn't really say no to learning new things. Most of my awake time I sit in an office, do the job I love and on my spare time I love to spend time in the nature doing something active with loved ones.

My first sailing trip happened as I was curious about how this activity can make someone so excited. As the Estonian saying goes, "your own eye is the king (i.e., you won't know before you see it yourself)," so I had to see it myself and the opportunity was laying there on the table the whole time.

My relative Norm has attended Raid Finland for decades now and I remember the talks about it since I was a kid. My brother and his wife have spent a week in the Finnish archipelago with Norm but I never thought I would go. My partner in crime and significant other, Per Christian, on the other hand, has grown up on a sailing boat in the Norwegian and Swedish archipelago. Once he met Norm they immediately found a common topic, sailboats and sailing. Long story short, Per Christian joined Norm in 2018 in Raid Finland and I got to join in 2019 to spend one week of my holiday on the water and see what this is all about that gets my man excited like a little boy.

I have no proper knowledge of sailing. I have tried to hold the tiller and I have been on bigger sailboats before (mostly with white wine and snacks) but I had never sailed a small craft sailboat. My preparation was that I was told not to worry, it's easy. Sure thing. Anyway, I was already sold on the beautiful nature, outdoorsy activity, nice people and something new for me to try out.

### The Sailing

As a newbie I had no idea what to expect. Most of the small craft sailboats look like rowing boats with sails. The fun about Raid Finland is that all the boats are different and beautiful in their own way. Norm's boat, the *Raider*, was the boat I spent most time on. An experienced crew member, Tom, gave me important advice and shared the knowledge of what is what, what to do and why. My sailing vocabulary in English grew enormously within the lovely week in Finnish archipelago. For six days of sailing we had amazing weather. Beautifully warm and helpful wind in most days.

I was mainly responsible for the charts and compass due to my recent orienteering interest and almost decent understanding of where is land and where is water. However, I was trusted to do some proper sailing on most days, too. On the first sailing day I had the Three boats on a betach.



## RAID Finland 2019

By Madli Allikmae

opportunity to do some tacking even. With guidance about timing, I shouted, "Ready about!" and waited for the crew's "Ready." I continued with "Lee Ho!" and then I needed to push the tiller to the correct side quickly. It was quite frightening at first but the experienced crew on board seemed to know what they got themselves into. The sailboat owner Norm didn't seem to call off the lady at the helm either so I guess I was safe to try.

The tacking went fine and I felt a little rush of adrenaline and power of managing a sailboat. I can already understand a bit what they like about it. As wind grew, I had gotten my share of adrenaline for that day and I carefully handed over the responsibility to more responsible crew members.

Another day I was at the helm when the wind was from behind (can't remember how that was called) and quite strong gusts. As we were in between some smaller islands and the wind was turning, I experienced some unexpected gybes to the sailboat and it spooked the hell out of me. I trust other people way more in this than myself and I was allowed to get back to my safe map reading again. As the wind was strong, we needed to reef the sail and continue tacking with a smaller sail. I got free salty showers after every five seconds but by that time I was so wet anyway, so I just tried to keep the charts away from the wettest parts.

A little ballast like me doesn't really help to balance the boat but I still tried. Whenever I could I threw some water back to where it came from, just to let the sea spit it in my face again in a few seconds. I really value this experience as I love to be useful and to try something new. There were no work thoughts, no worries other than "let's get this sailboat and crew nicely to shore" and "maybe Minna's dinner would be good to have soon, too!"

Even though we had very nice sailing weather, not all the days are brothers (another Estonian idiom). One day we needed to row half of the time and another we were just quietly waiting for the miracle called wind to happen. The day of rowing I offered myself to pull the oars and be the "dumb muscle power" as I felt quite useless on the boat most of the time. It was a good workout that I enjoyed very much.

The day of quietly waiting for the wind, I can assure you, I managed to get tired of my own thoughts after some time. This was

a good lesson of how my mind is working non stop. I understood that I had some winding down to do and it was a perfect time and place for that. Sailing is like therapy and meditation, the sound of water, the beautiful scenery, the jokes of the crew, thrill of speed and lovely lunches at little islands where we otherwise never would get.

I most certainly got some good experience of sailing. I'm no expert but I know some vocabulary and I know the things I can help with, even if I'm not yet to be the one to trust at the helm in critical situations. I was encouraged to try and learn, that I got for sure and I liked it!

### The People

Raid Finland wouldn't be the same without the amazing bunch of people. I got to know so many kind souls that made me a richer person for sure. All of them are smart, funny and just so nice. I'm amazed how friendly those raiders are and how welcoming they are of newbies who don't really know anything about sailing. "Want to try my boat? Sure!" "Want to hold the helm? No worries, I can teach you a few tips and tricks!" "Time for some anchor dram (anker-dram, ankkurirüüpi?) on Ville's boat!"

That bunch of people was enjoying themselves very much. Friendly jokes, nice sauna talks, amazing food by Minna, joyful singing by Gavin and just friendly faces everywhere. We also had a happy go lucky sail dog Jack who caused the only man overboard (or more like dog overboard) situation when he was too eager to go sailing on another boat. Jack also managed to steal most of the flipflops and boss around with the neighbour's dog.

On the last day we were capable of wrecking the jetty. No, not with sailboats, of course not. We just stepped on it and I guess we had eaten a bit too much of Minna's delicious food that the jetty just had enough of us.

All in all I am very thankful for Norm and others for this opportunity. I suggest everyone to try out sailing, it will teach you a lot and you will see a lot, too. It was a lovely week of beautiful nature, amazing people, tons of sailing tips and learning, some book reading by the sea, sauna and good food. What else could you wish for?

### Madli Allikmae

Madli Allikmae is a 30-year-old economist living and working in her home town of Tallinn, Estonia. She enjoys vigorous recreation such as orienteering (accompanied sometimes by Zorro, her 75lb German Shepherd). Now she has added sailing and rowing to her list of activities and will again be crew on *Raider* in the summer of 2020.





*Raider underway.*



*Chris navigating.*



*Lunch stop.*



*Navigator plus two.*

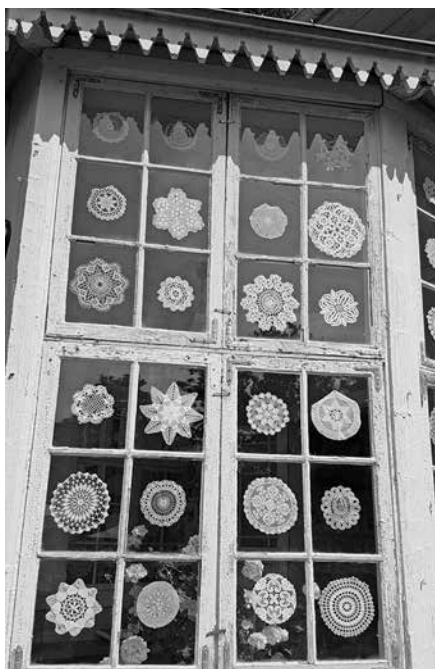


*Musicoo.*



*Andres resting.*

*Café window doilies.*



*Matti.*

*Visit Finland!*



*Lao at helm.*





# The Lifeboat Disaster of 1886

~ Keith Muscott

## Part VI: The End of *The Mexico*

'...And she beat the bank down with her bows  
and the ride of her keel:  
The breakers rolled on her beam with ruinous shock;  
And canvass and compass, the whorl and the wheel  
Idle for ever to waft her or wind her with, these she endured...'

*The Wreck of The Deutschland*, Gerard Manley Hopkins

'Things have a life of their own,' the gypsy proclaimed in a harsh accent. 'It's simply a matter of waking up their souls.'

*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*,  
Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

**I**N THE NEXT ISSUE, THE FINAL PART OF THIS LONG STORY will deal with the effects of the *Mexico* disaster on British lifeboat design, and on the RNLI as an institution: it became so well supported by the general public that it grew to be one of our richest charities. In 2018 its income for the year reached £190.1 million.

Every year the RNLI qualifies as a 'Super-Major Charity' with an income of over £100 million pa. Last year's figure was beaten only by Macmillan Cancer Support, Oxfam and Sightsavers.

This penultimate chapter, Part VI, will concentrate on the iron barque herself, for her life did not end in the Ribble Estuary but years later and much further north on the East Coast of Scotland, in a gale that blew from the opposite direction and drove her up a shore that her tough hull found less easy to resist than hard-packed Lancashire sand.

Forgive me for reminding you of a few facts about the *Mexico*. She was a barque of 492 tons, built by Oswalds of Sunderland in 1860, launched as *John Bull* and rated A1 at Lloyds. She measured 150 feet in length (45.72 metres), 27 feet 6 inches beam (8.38 metres), and ± 17 feet high (5.2 metres) from keel to gunwale.

The barque is a type developed from the brig. Fitzroy's *Beagle* was an example of a 'Ten-Gun Brig'. Both of the brig's masts are square-rigged, with the mainmast also carrying a large fore-and-aft sail. No fore-and-aft sails are found on a barque's foremast and mainmast – squaresails only – but

her mizzenmast carries just fore and aft sails and no square sails.

Messrs Ostling Gebruder of Hamburg changed her name from *John Bull* to *Mexico* when she came into their hands, possibly because she was destined for trade in the Americas. Before the 1886 disaster she was the only ship to bear this name.

R Bulman & Co of Liverpool chartered her from Ostling Gebruder to transport a large and valuable cargo to Guayaquil on the west coast of South America. 1886 predated the opening of the Panama Canal (1919), so this would have been no milk run.

*Mexico* took a terrific beating off Southport, so one would think that the only rewards for her salvager were the remnants of her cargo plus the scrap value of her wrought iron hull. This proved to be spectacularly not the case.

William Allsup & Sons of Preston bought the wreck for £45. The cost of salvaging her cargo was kept to a bare minimum: blocks and tackle were slung from the surviving mizzen mast to lower goods to small local operators using horses and carts between tides. This was not only cheap, but efficient. It was just three months later on March 10th, 1887, that two Preston tugs were able to tow the lighter hull into deep water. A great crowd watched as she was brought inshore and anchored.

This public fascination for a hulk that was already being called 'The Widow-Maker' by unthinking observers may have given William Allsup another idea for capitalising on his investment – but probably he had been aware of all the

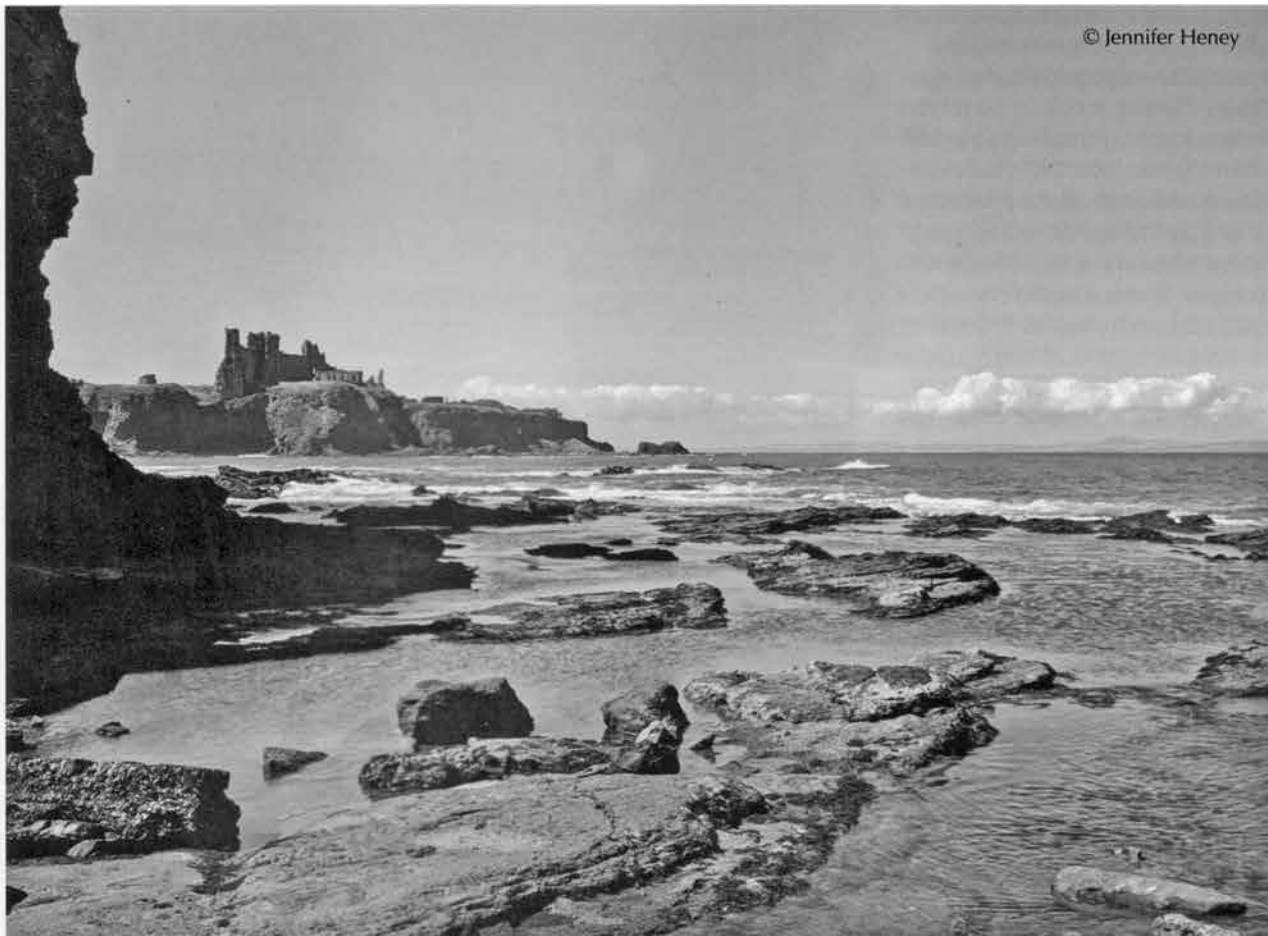
possibilities from the outset.

The hull dried out within easy reach, so the leaks were quickly plugged. The tugs returned on the following morning's tide and towed her over the estuary to Lytham, to arrive at noon.

Allsup soon had a temporary jetty built out to her, and there she remained for two years as a public attraction, drawing hosts of visitors and making a vast profit for her owner. In modern terms it almost amounts to quickly cleaning up Grenfell Tower and charging public admission. Those times were more hard-nosed and less squeamish than ours – or is it that we share the same level of improper public curiosity but it is more easily satiated by the wider range and penetration of our media? I'll leave that one to you.

Most of *Mexico*'s reclaimed cargo was sold and after two years Allsup used some of his profits to have the barque towed to Preston and be thoroughly repaired and re-registered. When she was sold on to Messrs L T Merrow & Son in 1889 she was once more a tough ocean-going trader.

So she remained for nine hard-working years before departing these shores again when purchased by a Danish company for £910. She made only one voyage with them – to the Falkland Islands, no less – before being sold twice more: to Messrs Sparing and Waldron of London, and then shortly after to a Norwegian company, Blohm & Osen. They renamed her *Valhalla*, after the palace in which heroes killed in battle feast with Odin for eternity. The name proved to be entirely fitting, in view of what happened next on her



© Jennifer Heney

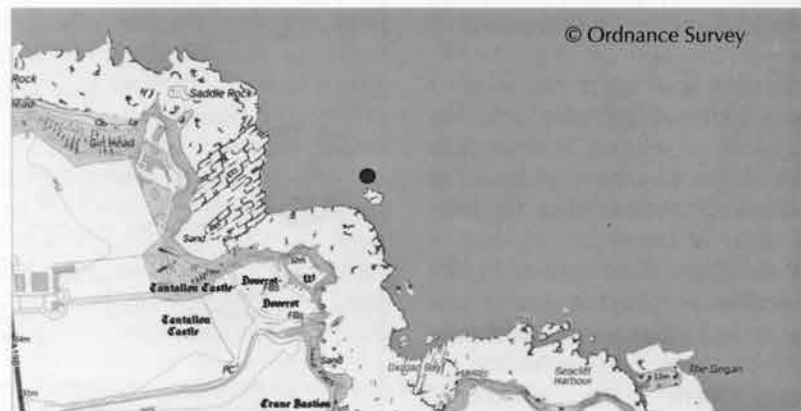
first voyage for her new owners.

As *John Bull*, then *Mexico*, the barque had served on the high seas for a quarter of a century. After 1886 she returned to trading for another 15 years, minus the two years spent as a beach attraction at Lytham.

Most sailing traders were worn out before they reached 40 years, but it took more than old age to slay the Iron Barque.

Very little information can be found about her last voyage, and what does exist tells no more than her setting out in February 1900 from London to Dundee 'in ballast', only to perish in a gale close inshore under Tantallon Castle, just east of North Berwick, East Lothian, on the rocky coast that guards the southern shore of the Firth of Forth.

In fact the local newspapers of the time reveal that she was bound for Grangemouth on the southern shore of the Firth, just short of Kincardine Bridge, with a cargo of loam. This material would have been used in the building industry for such as light concrete aggregates. Throughout the 19th century and after, Grangemouth was a highly industrialised area, well placed to benefit from passing



© Ordnance Survey

(Top) Tantallon Castle and the stretch of coast where *Valhalla* was stranded at 02:30, Tuesday, February 27th, 1900. The photograph was taken close to HW, so the 'island' close to the castle cliffs on the horizon is not the tidal rock that marks the position of the wreck, as seen on the chart above, but Saddle Rock on the other side of Tantallon Harbour, which is indicated by the patch of sand on the chart. A very thin sliver of surf in the distance to the left of Saddle Rock in the photograph indicates the position of the tidal rock close inshore

(Right) 'Valhalla Rock' exposed at Low Water off the castle cliffs. The barque lies in 33 metres, to the left of the rock and a little further out, as indicated on the chart above



© Jennifer Heney

trade in the Firth, close to the Forth and Clyde Canal and just downstream from the world-famous Carron Company.

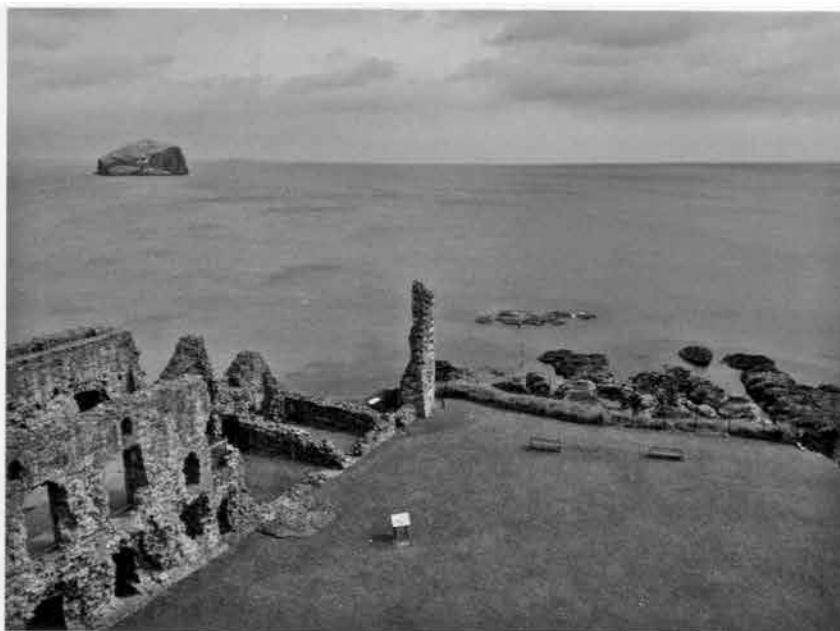
The Grangemouth Dockyard Company had been established in 1885 and the Soap Works in 1897, to turn out glycerine and other useful products as well as soap. Today, the Grangemouth Refinery is one of the largest of its kind in Europe. Grangemouth Port has the biggest container terminal in Scotland, with 9 million tonnes of cargo passing through the dock facilities each year.

Back in 1900 *Valhalla* may have been one of several vessels setting a course up the Firth that night, aiming to share some of the profits that accrued from trading in that lively place, which already seemed to have one foot firmly planted in the 20th century.

In quiet, clear conditions, Captain Sorvig of the barque *Valhalla* would have approached the Firth of Forth at night with confidence and certainty, identifying shapes and lights as he went, dim though they would have been. But it is too easy to condemn him out of hand as reckless and irresponsible on the night in question. I am sure that he intended to be a long way out in the North Sea from where he found himself and his barque at two the next morning.

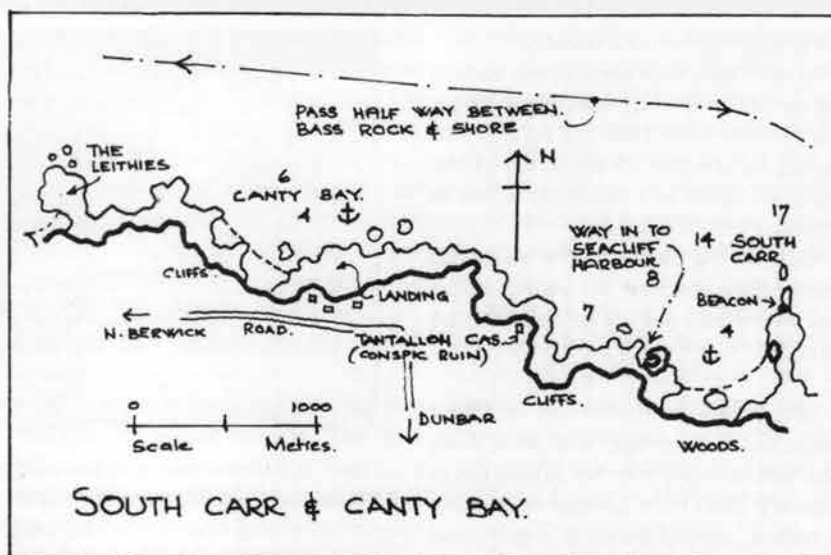
Certainly the safest course for a sailing ship heading for the Firth from the south in a strong onshore wind would be to pass Bass Rock well to seaward and turn in when the track was clear of North Berwick and its outliers. Captain Sorvig would not have deliberately chosen to be so close inshore on his approach, just shaving South Carr with its stone beacon – a known hazard in poor weather – before falling foul of the Tantallon Castle reefs. Had he by some miracle survived this perilous approach, he still had the islands and rocks of Craigeith, The Lamb and Fidra off North Berwick, then the rocky point of Eyebroughy, as they were directly in his path. From this moment the barque was clearly doomed.

There are other possible reasons for the *Valhalla* finding herself in this predicament than incompetent navigation, but we need to examine them after we see how two other craft fared in the vicinity that night – the Dunbar and North Berwick lifeboats,



The full picture. A finger of Tantallon Castle masonry points to the resting place of the *Mexico/Valhalla*. The tidal rock is seen to the right of it, just off the castle reefs. It is Low Water. Bass Rock lies offshore, 1.4 miles away. It is clear that no sailing ship should have been anywhere near this channel on that black night of February 27th, in an onshore gale with visibility reduced to naught by a rainstorm and a sea-fog, or haar, in attendance. Once more the *Mexico* had been caught on a lee shore and could do nothing about it. Studying this photograph made me realise that there are a number of similarities to the situation which developed off Southport in December 1886.

Photograph © Jennifer Heney



Note the position of The Leithies, Tantallon Castle and South Carr (with its beacon further inshore than the extremity of its dangers). Seacliff Harbour was recently mentioned as a lunch stop for a dinghy sailor who posted pictures on the DCA Facebook page: '... a mini harbour carved out of solid rock at the west side of South Carr Bay...' The sketch map and this description were taken from the Forth Yacht Clubs Association's Pilot Handbook for the East Coast of Scotland, pp.27 & 28.

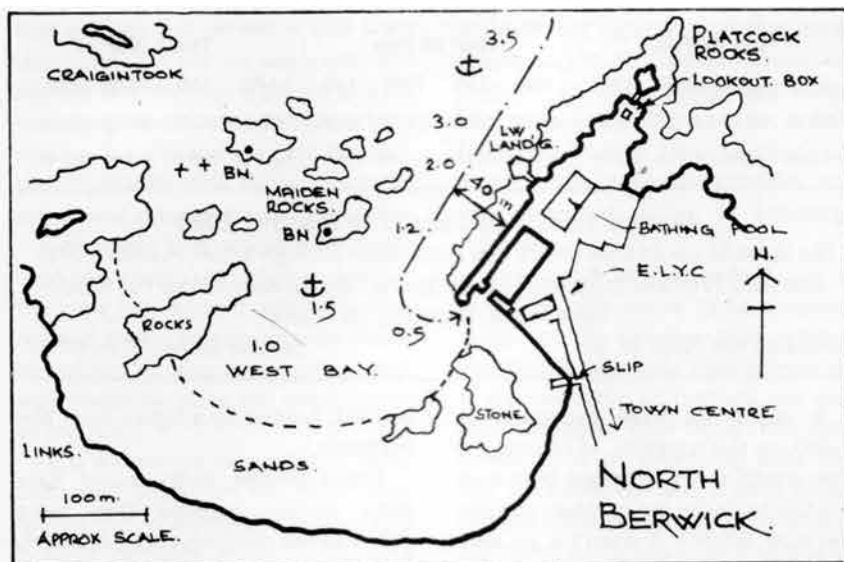
The injunction to pass half way between Bass Rock and the shore, with the ensuing inshore sailing directions in the text, is for light craft only in settled conditions

the *Sarah Pickard* and the *Fergus Ferguson*.

There were nine Norwegian crewmen with Captain Sorvig on *Valhalla*. One of them sustained a

fractured elbow in the violence of the storm prior to grounding. What must they have felt when the barque hit and they looked up to see Tantallon Castle looming above them in the





The hatched track ending in an arrowhead is exactly the line that the *Fergus Ferguson* was trying to take in reverse, hemmed in by rocks on all sides, in order to leave the harbour in the teeth of wind and waves and head for Tantallon Castle  
 Source: *ibidem*, see previous page

darkness? Was this the entrance to the underworld? The door to Odin's palace?

Local people became aware of the wreck very quickly. After dawn broke and February 27th ran its course, *The Edinburgh Evening News* developed the story which they printed later in the day; it changed as telegram after telegram reached its offices, probably initiated by the station officer of the Coastguard, H Thorne, who was early on the scene. The 'three-masted vessel' that had run ashore near Tantallon, causing the North Berwick lifeboat to be called out, was rapidly confirmed as the Norwegian barque *Valhalla*. Soon after that they learned that the lifeboat had given up, following three attempts to clear the harbour. The Lifeboat Secretary, WH Montgomery, who had called her out initially, 'thought it wise to desist from any further endeavour'. The Seacliff rocket apparatus crew was then alerted to attempt to put a line over the *Valhalla*.

Another vessel, the *Thalia of Windau*, which previously had been floating bottom up near the island of Craigleith before she was towed away to reside temporarily in the bay at Tantallon, was broken up by heavy seas close to the *Valhalla* when she dragged her anchor and rolled ashore.

The report in *The Edinburgh Evening News* ends with the Dunbar lifeboat being called out when the 'rocket brigades had failed to reach the vessel'. The word 'reach' is ambiguous

here. Even in 1900 it was quite easy to visit the castle, where there are flat sites before it facing the sea, so hauling their carts loaded with pyrotechnics, line boxes, and tripods across tracks and fields and setting up would not have presented any insuperable difficulty – but it would have taken some time. Also, a brigade had failed to 'reach' the *Ecclefechan* with their rockets in another sense only days before. They had thought it possible to get a line over the ship, because they did fire rockets, but they were aiming into the teeth of an onshore gale and the missiles fell short or were blown off course. Even though the barque was close in at Tantallon, the same powerful onshore blast had reasserted

itself, and firing from a higher position above the shore might not have been an advantage, being so fully exposed to the wind. More persuasive is the description of the crew successfully and quickly helping themselves off the barque after she had driven up the beach (See news report next page), so probably no rocketry was used at all, as they were too late.

*The Haddingtonshire Courier* of Friday, March 2nd, was circulated three days after the *Evening News* – perhaps because it was not a daily – and it filled one or two gaps in the previous account. We are lucky to have a reasonably full story of the wrecking in *The Courier*, as there was by then major competition from another dramatic news item – the relief of Ladysmith, with its concomitant street events, widespread hanging of bunting and children's thanksgiving parties, all to be reported in depth; though the Second Boer War would still drag on brutally until the Treaty of Vereeniging signalled its end in 1902.

*The Courier* confirmed that the *Valhalla* had run aground 'during hazy weather and in a rainstorm, and in the course of the forenoon became a total wreck'. The North Berwick lifeboat, the *Fergus Ferguson*, failed to leave North Berwick harbour '... owing to the exceedingly stormy state of the sea. They were quite unable to make headway'. Four men were washed out of the boat: John Miller, James Livingston, James Foster and John Thomson, with the Cox, John Thorburn. They safely reboarded and retrieved their four oars, but were

The *Fergus Ferguson* returning to North Berwick Harbour, along the track drawn in the chart shown above, with a full crew of 13 on board



ordered not to make another valiant futile attempt, '...the great force of the waves making it impossible to get around the point...'. Another of the lifeboat crew, Walter Williamson, was struck across the chest by a wave-propelled oar, but only slightly injured.

What of the Dunbar lifeboat, the *Sarah Pickard*? There was considerable delay in assembling a full crew, ten oars plus Cox, Deputy Cox and Bowman, '...as the regular crew, or most of them, were in other ports, having had to run for shelter during the night. A crew was finally mustered, comprising fishermen, three sailors from the stranded ship *Ecclefechan*\*, and a militiaman of the Black Watch. Two others of the same corps were preparing to go, when their places were taken by fishermen.' (*The Edinburgh Evening News*)

According to *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, very soon after the barque grounded, 'The crew of the *Valhalla*, ten in number ... early succeeded in getting ashore, availing themselves of an opportunity of getting off without assistance. Having made fast a rope to the bow of the ship, one of the crew got ashore with the end of it, and so established communication.'



Distribution of mast, spars, oars and rope

\* *The Ecclefechan*. Only four days earlier, on February 23rd, 'while a moderate easterly gale was blowing, accompanied by a heavy sea and thick weather...' (*The Life-Boat Journal*, May 1901) the 2,105-ton, four-masted iron barque *Ecclefechan* was stranded on the Chapel Rocks at Skateraw Point, SE of Dunbar. The local life-saving brigades moved quickly, but the barque was too far out to be reached by their rockets. The *Sarah Pickard* launched at 09:45, skippered by the assistant coxswain in the absence of Walter Fairbairn, and in two visits she rescued 24 of the crew. On the first trip 14 men were picked up and landed at Skateraw Harbour; on the second ten men were rescued and landed at Dunbar, their arrival '...lustily cheered by a large

Tue 27 Feb				Wed 28 Feb				Thu 1 Mar			
HW	LW	HW	LW	HW	LW	HW	LW	HW	LW	HW	LW
00:26	06:24	12:37	19:03	01:17	07:13	13:25	19:50	02:03	07:59	14:09	20:33
4.6 m	1.4 m	4.9 m	0.9 m	5.0 m	1.1 m	5.3 m	0.5 m	5.3 m	0.8 m	5.6 m	0.3 m

### Dunbar Tides: February 27 to March 1 1900

The *Valhalla* would have struck two hours after 1st High Water, February 27th  
February 27th was three days before Spring Tide; 20 days before Full Moon

New Moon: Thursday, 1st March

Sunset on Feb 26th: 17.36

Sunrise on Feb 27th: 07.07

It could not have happened as quickly as this suggests, of course; the men would have had to take their time in order to dodge the breakers and use the rope safely – it wasn't a zip wire – and one of them had a fractured elbow, after all. The old Iron Barque must have fought the waves to the last and given them their chance. She did not succumb easily and become an immediate 'total wreck', as reported, but lasted from 02:30 to 'the course of the forenoon', say between six and eight hours, before she finally gave up the ghost.

The lifeboats of North Berwick and Dunbar were practically identical in size and design. Both were self-righting boats and measured 34 feet in length by 7ft 6ins beam. They seated 10 oarsmen. It was a tried and trusted, tough design, the *Sarah Pickard* being very similar to her predecessor, the first RNLI boat at Dunbar, the 33ft *Wallace*. There is a photograph of the *Wallace* being launched in an 'alternative fashion' – dropped about fifteen feet off the harbour wall into the water. The tough little boat was on station from 1865 to 1893, when the *Sarah Pickard* was built, at the expense of Mr Andrew Pickard of Leeds, who had also in the same year funded the building of a 37-footer, the *George Pickard*, for the Peterhead station. The *Fergus Ferguson* of North Berwick was built

in 1887, funded by a legacy from Mrs Ferguson.

These smaller boats would have been chosen because they were suited to the shoaling, rocky, relatively inaccessible coast they were to operate from. They were light, easy to launch and nimble under sail or oars. There are few photographs that show them under sail, because their small size meant that their modest spars could be easily stowed down the centre of the cockpit and raised rapidly when needed (*see photograph, left*)

The coxswains of the Dunbar station were a durable breed. 'Old Tom' Herkes retired in 1897 after 31 years' service, 19 as Coxswain. Walter Fairbairn was the popular choice to succeed him, and he held the position with great distinction for 34 years. Fairbairn's great-great-grandson is the present Cox of the Dunbar boat.

There is no doubt that the *Sarah Pickard* travelled to Tantallon under sail, not oars, once she had cleared Dunbar Harbour. Unlike poor *Fergus Ferguson*, beaten back continually by enormous seas and unable to escape North Berwick, the Dunbar boat would have caught the wind soon after launching and made remarkable time along the coast for 6 miles / 10 kilometres to Tantallon with a crew that was by no means fully competent.

Whether the *Valhalla's* crew

crowd at the Battery'. The captain and three others stayed with the barque despite warnings from the Deputy Cox, but were afterwards taken off by a steam tug. They had come a long way from Chittagong with their cargo of jute to fail so close to their intended destination – Dundee.

She became a total wreck. A reward was given to the LB crew '... in recognition of their good service'. The *Sarah Pickard's* last call before her retirement came only days later to the *Valhalla*, but as she did not make contact the brave attempt by a scratch crew went unrecorded in *The Life-Boat*: no service, no cigar... Before she retired, Walter Fairbairn and his crew set a launch record of 2 mins 35 secs – a time that the crew of a RIB would be proud of.

had self-rescued or not – and I am convinced they did – it was a welcome miracle that they were ashore quickly, so saving Cox Walter Fairbairn from making the decision to take his boat with its motley crew among the rocky shoals and pounding surf at Tantallon – a prospect that would have made even him blanch. Either they saw that the crew had made it ashore, or they realised that a rescue attempt would be suicidal, so they continued on their way, rocketing along the coast, driven by the gale.

It is a common expression in these parts that boats 'run the Firth' when caught out in bad weather, and that is what Fairbairn chose to do, as it was not possible to turn and face the gale and return to Dunbar, and neither could he turn in to North Berwick as the huge seas continued to drive in there unabated. The *Sarah Pickard* finally fetched up in the safety of Leith Port, almost 30 miles from her home station.

This story highlights the efficiency and determination of the East Lothian (Haddingtonshire) lifeboat and land services at that time, and the extensive support for them that could be quickly mobilised: it was never less than extremely impressive throughout the emergency. They were absolutely as effective as the technology of the time allowed.

The same level of care and support continued after the event. AD Wallace and Station Officer Thorne were joint agents for the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Society, and they supplied the *Valhalla* crew with refreshment and brought them to North Berwick. They sent them off

to Leith that night so that they could report to the Norwegian Consul and then be speedily transported home. The crewman who had his elbow fractured prior to the stranding was attended by a Doctor Crombie and was afterwards taken to Edinburgh Infirmary.

The storm in the early hours of February 27th seems to have been a repeat of the weather that wrecked the *Ecclefechan* only days previously. It was probably an easterly, like that one, bringing with it a diabolical combination of gale-force wind and fog. Whatever the actual wind speed, this coast is exposed to the full fetch of the North Sea across from Scandinavia, which explains the size of the seas.

The North Sea lies mainly on the European continental shelf, which means a mean depth of only 90 metres / 300 feet. It features a number of great banks, largely formed of unconsolidated glacial debris, that further reduce the depth in places; elsewhere, deep trenches contribute to the uneven bottom, which, taken altogether, means that the sea above always reacts swiftly to extreme weather.

The easterly direction (possibly with some north in it) explains not only why the narrow navigable exit from North Berwick Harbour was blocked by huge seas, but ironically why the Dunbar lifeboat scudded along at high speed, on a starboard beam reach, or even a broad reach, up the coast past Tantallon.

Why was Captain Sorvig unable to avoid being driven ashore, especially as he would have known about the effects of the recent *Ecclefechan* gale and would have been wary? Surely he would have given the coast a wide enough berth as he sailed north?

The clue to the answer lies in why *Sarah Pickard* lacked her usual crew that night. 'The regular crew, or most of them, were in other ports, having had to run for shelter during the night...' These would have been fishermen who were out making up for lost time after the *Ecclefechan* gale. Obviously further bad weather was 'not expected, and equally clearly, it blew up in the middle of the night without warning, making the fishing boats 'run the Firth' as usual to escape it.

Sorvig was not so lucky, and the *Valhalla* must have made tremendous leeway during that night, just as

she had done under the command of Captain Burmester in the Ribble estuary in 1886. Both crews had an agonising wait before the inevitable happened as she was blown sideways towards the shore. This does not reveal any particular weakness in *Valhalla's* design; the same thing happened to hundreds of heavily laden ships that foundered on the Scottish shores of the North Sea over the centuries.

Finally, the descriptions of the *Valhalla* becoming 'a total wreck' and 'completely smashed up' do not sit easily with a modern report compiled by divers for an national archaeological survey of Scottish wrecks, which states briefly that it is in need of conservation if possible, as the wrought iron is beginning to show signs of deterioration. This does not sound like a description of twisted metal lying flat on the bottom.

The coast in this area is very steep-to, once out past the reefs. The bottom falls away rapidly – another reason why the waves would have been enormous that night as they arrived at the Tantallon shore in their full majesty. The *Valhalla* lies 33 metres down, but quite close in. If anyone is aware of a report made by a diving group that has visited her, or an official survey, I would really like to know of it. I have been unable to find anything in that line.

There are a lot of similarities between the stranding of the *Mexico* and the wrecking of the '*Valhalla*', which I'll leave for you to add up. Personally, I am glad to know that one of the lifeboats was unable to get out and reach the wreck at Tantallon, and the second one passed it by after seeing that there was no need to look closely – the outcome might otherwise have been as tragic as the disaster on that first black night off Southport, fourteen years before.

KM

The legendary Cox Walter Fairbairn, with the successor to *Sarah Pickard*:  
*William Arthur Millward* (1901–1931)



#### Acknowledgements of Help:

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**Dunbar & District History Society**

**Jennifer Heney:** For photography, help with research, proof-reading – and enthusiasm equal to mine



### The Delivery Trip

After I retired from the locks and dam job I had time for some adventures. I had been working in a sailboat shop with Timmy. He knew everyone who was a serious sailer. He got me started doing delivery trips. I had sailed a few times on the *Hindsite*. She was a 49' aluminum racing sloop. On this trip Charlie, the owner and skipper, wanted to move the boat from its homeport of Bayfield, Wisconsin, to Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, for the winter to get some work done on the boat.

Sounds easy enough, right, from Wisconsin to a different port in Wisconsin? Problem is that we had to sail all the way around the UP to get there, nearly a thousand miles total, and it was on a different one of the Great Lakes. We were also doing this trip late in the season.

We left Bayfield with an experienced crew. Timmy, my coworker, was along, also another guy who worked part time at the shop because he was a practicing lawyer. There were a couple more guys who I didn't know.

On delivery trips the engine gets used a lot. It is not a pleasure cruise, the goal is to get the boat somewhere. We left under sail, Timmy insisted on that. He loved to sail. I knew it would be a long trip so I went below and picked out a good bunk and had a long nap.

Our plan was to stop at Houghton Hadcock and go through the canal there and save the long trip around the Keweenaw Peninsula. Before we reached our first stop the wind had increased and Timmy didn't reef soon enough so the jenny got ripped when they tried to change sail settings. I woke up when the sails were being battered and the Diesel got started. I went topside to find a couple of seasick sailors getting the sails under control. They were done for the night and went below.

The lawyer and I stayed in the cockpit and steered towards the entrance of the canal, still several hours away. When we got closer to land we moved into the wind shadow of the point and things calmed down some. Another head appeared. Now there were three of us running things.

I was on the wheel as we rounded the end of the jetty and motored into the west end of the canal. It was dead calm inside the canal. The skipper's head appeared. All he said was, "good, we are there." He had been among the seasick sailors. Good seasick buddy Tim also came to and joined us as we motored up to a dock where we tied up.

## Sea Stories & Tall Tales

By Mississippi Bob

The skipper took us uptown to his favorite eating place in the UP and we got a good breakfast. Back at the boat after breakfast we got the jenny off and laid it on the grass so Timmy could sew up the damage from the night before. It was midday when we were ready to sail.

The dockmaster came by with a weather report and passed it on to the skipper and we all heard it. There were predicted winds 35-40mph from the north. The skipper was planning to sail anyway. The dockmaster said that it was not advisable but the skipper had a time frame and we must get underway.

This is the lake that sank the *Edmund Fitzgerald* when the storms of November came early. Did we belong out there in late October? Charlie lost his crew that afternoon, me included, and we spent the night tied up at the marina. In the morning we got underway with the full crew. The wind had switched from the south and we were in the wind shadow of the Michigan shore. It was rather nice sailing as we headed east for Whitefish Bay.

The boat had a lot of electronics, all in different displays that could be removed and replaced with other functions. We were surrounded by these electronics when at the wheel. The skipper noticed that they were telling funny stuff. He thought that maybe the battery was getting low and said that we should run the engine for a while to charge the batteries up.

Fine, but the engine wouldn't start. We were a sailboat after all, why did we need an engine? Not until we got to Sault Ste Marie where the locks were. Timmy and I got to work on that project. We were the only ones onboard who could get our hands dirty. We went through the checklist routine. We checked the fuel supply. Then we pulled the injectors. Everything checked out and still no engine. We need to call a pro.

We still had to land on the lock wall without power. That went OK so we tied up at the end of the guide wall and tried to call the lock on our radio. No answer. After several attempts I put on my Corp of Engineers hat and started hiking up the wall to the control station. I never got there when a couple of security guys whisked me away under arrest.

I tried to explain why I was there and asked why the lock did not answer their radio. They run things a lot differently than we did on the river. They decided that I was not a smuggler and let me go back to the boat. When I got back the skipper was on the radio and had been told that we couldn't lock through without an engine.

We sat on the end of the wall for hours while a couple of freighters went by but we had to stay put. The Coast Guard even came by with a big inflatable with twin 150hp engines. They couldn't pull us through they, had a four ton limit. I didn't understand that because our boat worked just fine with 40hp.

We finally got towed through by a pilot boat that was downbound. They slid us into a slip at a coal dock below the lock on the US side where we sat again waiting for the pro mechanic. He finally arrived at about 1500 and went to work. He did all the same things that Timmy and I had done out on the lake the day before. Nothing worked. He was hunched over the Palmer engine when he told the guys in the cockpit to pull the off/on control off and on again. Bingo, he found the trouble. The push/pull wire that turned that injector control off/on was simply sliding in the clamp that should have done the job. We were back in business and ready to go.

We got underway down the St Mary's River. The sun was setting about the time that we got going. There was a stiff breeze in our faces and it began to rain and sleet. It wasn't nice. Different members of the crew started complaining. Not about the weather, the big problem was timing. Several guys had commitments back in Minneapolis. I think that one even had a wedding that he was paying for and he wanted to walk the bride down the aisle.

The situation was that we didn't have time to get to Sturgeon Bay and back to Minneapolis before the weekend. Time to turn around and find a place to park the boat until plans could be made to finish the delivery. We got back to Sault Ste Marie and ducked into the marina on the Canadian side. We parked the boat and the skipper called a cab. Actually, he called a car rental on the Michigan side. Very shortly a woman drove in with a minivan.

We all got onboard with our sea bags and headed back to the US side. Clearing customs was easy before 9/11. We dropped the driver at her office. The skipper signed some papers and we were off for a long night ride across the UP and through Wisconsin, packed in the minivan with all our gear. It was late the next day when we got back to Minneapolis with a mission not completed.

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I was working at the local sailboat shop one day and the boss said, "salvage any hardware and cut up the rest small enough to fit in the dumpster." I was looking at a small generic Sunfish type. It had no bottom. It looked like it had been towed down the highway for several miles. The nameplate said that the boat had been built in Waxahachie Texas. Some Texans had put some TLC into this boat. I didn't have long to think about it, within a half hour it was stuffed neatly into a dumpster.

This incident got me thinking back to Larry's Boat. Larry's Boat died over at the St Paul Yacht Club. Larry's Boat was a fixture for many years on the St Paul waterfront, it was a large houseboat that tied up at the Yacht Club for some 20 years. The boat had no engine and had to be towed anytime it got moved. It was the home of Larry Crosby for most of the time that it tied up at St Paul.

Larry was a bartender, he was also Irish and the interior of his boat showed it. Step inside this boat and I felt like I was at a St Patty's Day party. Larry welcomed people to drop in and it became a hangout for many boat people. As a yard bird at the club I spent much time inside this Irish Haven. We often had our coffee breaks there, especially on cold winter days.

Larry was a cigar smoker. Many of his guests burned up tobacco, too, so when at his home I had to cut my way through the haze and wade through the BS to make myself at home.

Times change. One spring day Larry's boat started taking on water. The boat got pulled. The lift's 15-ton warning horn was protesting loudly as the boat cleared the

## Epitaph for Larry's Boat

By Mississippi Bob

water. The 18-ton boat was more than the lift was designed for. The boat got set on the hydraulic trailer, which bowed badly.

We moved the boat to a bare spot in the yard and blocked it there. We began an examination of the bottom. Water was still leaking out of many places. Several knowledgeable people studied the bottom and the word came down that the boat needed a new skin. The decision was made not to return the boat to the water unless it was fixed right.

Larry lived on this boat because it was a cheap place to live. He didn't have the funds to make this kind of repair so he gave the boat to the club and walked away. The club tried in vain for several weeks to find a new owner for it. Sometimes you just can't even give things away. The word finally came down the line was that the local scrapyard would buy it but we had to deliver it to them.

We began removing any parts that had value. We also began dumping 20 year's worth of Larry's treasures. We probably lightened the boat about a half ton in this operation. The boat was still a couple of tons heavier than our hydraulic trailer was rated for.

The permits were obtained from the state to move a "wide load" vehicle over the highways. I was asked to work late as the moving time was not to be until after 9pm.

The club bought our supper that evening and about 8pm we began lining up our parade. The permits required a car in advance of the boat with flashers to lead the column. We had a forklift to pull the trailer and another truck following with more flashers going.

After we were set up to leave we had a few minutes to spare before our 9pm departure and I began noticing many of the "liveaboards" began showing up. St Paul Yacht Club had about 15 boats with liveaboards, most of them showed up within minutes of our departure. I noticed a few cameras in the group but I also noticed a few wet cheeks. I suddenly realized that I was at a wake.

Other folks began showing up to help with the move. By the time we were ready to roll we had people walking alongside like pallbearers.

The parade began to move. It got 50 yards, came to a hill and stopped. The forklift wasn't powerful enough to pull this load up onto the levee. A second forklift came into play and the caravan began moving again. The liveaboards waved their last goodbyes and the pallbearers began dropping away as the speed got faster than a good walk.

Three miles later we pulled into the salvage yard, blocked the boat where they wanted it and pulled our trailer home with one blown tire.

A week later the boss sent me back to the salvage yard to get our blocking. The workers at the yard steered me to the pile of blocking. There was no sign that Larry's boat had ever existed, only memories.



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### **Boston, Massachusetts**

US Coast Guard suspended its search for three missing fishermen in the waters off Massachusetts. Watchstanders at the Coast Guard District One command center initially received an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) alert from the fishing boat *Leonardo*, which capsized and sank 24 nautical miles southwest of Martha's Vineyard.

Crewmembers from Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod launched an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and rescued one person from a life raft. The search spanned over 25 hours and includes the following assets, Coast Guard Cutter *Escanaba*, Coast Guard Cutter *Cobia*, Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod. It was reported the missing were not wearing survival suits or life jackets. After all leads are exhausted, the Coast Guard suspends a search pending new information.

### **Atlantic City, New Jersey**

The Coast Guard medevaced a man from a cruise ship approximately 17 miles off the coast of Little Egg Inlet Saturday night. The captain of the cruise ship *Anthem of the Seas* contacted watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay's command center and notified them that the 70-year-old passenger was having severe abdominal issues and needed a higher level of medical care.

An aircrew aboard an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Atlantic City launched to assist. Once on scene, the aircrew hoisted the man up, accompanied by his son, and transported them to AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center in Atlantic City. "We are glad that the crew contacted us as soon as they did," said David Umbereger, command duty officer at Sector Delaware Bay. "The speedy notification and precise coordination was key in getting the man the care he needed."

### **Cape Fear, North Carolina**

The Coast Guard medevaced a man from a cruise ship approximately 160 miles southeast of Cape Fear, North Carolina. Watchstanders at the Coast Guard's Fifth District command center were contacted by the captain of the cruise ship *Norwegian Bliss*, who requested a medevac for an 85-year-old passenger who was in need of medical assistance. Watchstanders contacted the duty flight surgeon who recommended a medevac.

An Air Station Elizabeth City MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew was launched along with an HC-130 Hercules aircrew. The Jayhawk aircrew arrived on scene and hoisted the man off the cruise ship while the Hercules aircrew provided support. The man was transported to Wilmington Airport where he was met by awaiting emergency medical services personnel.

### **Pamlico County, North Carolina**

The Coast Guard pulled two mariners from the water after their vessel sank and is currently searching for the other two crewmembers in Pamlico Sound, North Carolina. Watchstanders at the Coast Guard's Fifth District command center received a distress signal from an emergency position indicating radio beacon registered to fishing vessel *Papa's Girl*.

A 47' Motor Lifeboat crew from Coast Guard Station Hatteras Inlet and an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City were launched to respond. Once on scene, the air-



## **Our Coast Guard in Action**

crew located two of the four crew members and transferred them to Sentara Albemarle Hospital in Elizabeth City for further medical care. Both mariners rescued were hypothermic and one required CPR but was later pronounced dead by hospital personnel.

A first light search was conducted the next morning by Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City aircrew members with negative results. A 47' Motor Lifeboat crew from Station Hatteras Inlet, along with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and a good Samaritan vessel by the name of *Aubrey Niel*, are continuing to search.

"This is a rough case and, as we continue to search, our thoughts are with the families of the mariners," said Matthew Brooks, search and rescue coordinator for the case. "We're grateful for the EPIRB that was activated during the case which enabled us to get resources on scene as quickly as possible. A properly registered EPIRB is a vital and highly recommended piece of equipment for mariners to have on their vessels."

### **San Juan, Puerto Rico**

The crew of a Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter medically evacuated a US citizen passenger from the *Queen Mary 2* cruise ship approximately 75 nautical miles north of San Juan. Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan received the medical evacuation request from the *Queen Mary 2* for a 68-year-old man who was experiencing a medical emergency which required immediate medical attention at a local hospital.

The *Queen Mary 2* was transiting to New York, approximately 268 nautical miles north of San Juan, when the incident was reported to the Coast Guard. To shorten the distance, Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan coordinated with the *Queen Mary 2* and Air Station Borinquen for a Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter to rendezvous with the cruise ship and conduct the medevac at the predetermined position.

Upon completing the rendezvous with the *Queen Mary 2*, the helicopter aircrew deployed their rescue swimmer aboard the cruise ship to assess the patient's condition. The Coast Guard aircrew conducted multiple hoists to bring the patient and his wife aboard the aircraft. Shortly thereafter the helicopter landed at the Fernando Luis Ribas Dominicci airport in San Juan where Emergency Medical Service personnel received and transported the patient and his wife to the Ashford Presbyterian Community Hospital in San Juan.

"I am happy that we were able to help the patient and his partner make it safely to the hospital," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Adam Tootle, MH-65 Dolphin helicopter flight mechanic for the medevac. "The training we complete prepared us well for this mission and for my first successful live hoist."



### **San Juan, Puerto Rico**

The Coast Guard medevaced a 34-year-old man from the cruise ship *Carnival Pride* Thursday approximately 75 miles north of San Juan. Coast Guard Sector San Juan watchstanders received a medevac request from the cruise ship, which was approximately 230 miles north of San Juan, stating the man was reportedly suffering from medical complications and needed further medical care. The watchstanders directed the cruise ship to a rendezvous point and directed the launch of a Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew.

The helicopter crew rendezvoused with the cruise ship approximately 75 miles north of San Juan and safely transported the man to awaiting emergency medical services, who took the man to a local hospital in San Juan.

"This case really stretched the range of our MH-65 helicopter," said Lt Katy Caraway, an Air Station Borinquen helicopter pilot. "This medevac's success was due to the combination of our crew's training and efficiency with *Carnival Pride's* professional conduct throughout the operation."



### **Andros Island, Bahamas**

The Coast Guard rescued three crewmembers from the sinking 62' tugboat *Gulf Man* approximately six miles northeast of Andros Island. A Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew arrived on scene, reported the tugboat was taking on water, hoisted all three crewmembers and transported them to Nassau, Bahamas, with no reported injuries.

Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders received an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) alert for the *Gulf Man* at approximately 6:20pm and directed the launch of the helicopter crew.

"Thanks to the proper utilization of an EPIRB, we were able to get on scene and rescue three people from a very dangerous situation," said Lt Andrew Connell, operations offi-



cer at Air Station Clearwater. "Always properly prepare yourself with safety and communications equipment before taking to the sea. Flares, EPIRBs and VHF radios can be game changers in the event of an emergency."



#### Miami, Florida

The Coast Guard rescued an overdue boater approximately nine miles southeast of Fort Pierce. A Coast Guard Air Station Miami MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew located the 14' skiff and hoisted the boater, who reportedly ran out of gas, while a Coast Guard Station Fort Pierce 33' Special Purpose Craft/Law Enforcement boat crew towed the boat back to the station.

Coast Guard Sector Miami watchstanders received notification from the mother of an overdue boater who left from Sandspirit Park Boat Ramp that morning and was supposed to return at 7pm. Coast Guard Sector Miami watchstanders directed the launch of Coast Guard Stations Lake Worth Inlet and Fort Pierce 33' Special Purpose Craft/Law Enforcement crews, diverted the Coast Guard Cutter *Cochito* (WPB-87329) crew, and Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders directed the launch of an Air Station Miami MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew and HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane crew to search.

"Once our 7th District and Sector Miami watchstanders received the call, they diligently coordinated and planned out the multiple asset launches and search patterns that led to the rescue of the missing boater," said Capt Dan Jones, deputy commander at Sector Miami. "The boater himself also contributed to the success of the mission by filing a float plan which let people know his schedule so they could alert the Coast Guard in a timely manner if it wasn't adhered to. We also want to remind boaters to, above all else, look out for each other. If you see suspicious activity, report it. You may save a life."



#### Savannah, Georgia

The Coast Guard, along with partner agencies and good Samaritans, located and rescued an overdue kayaker on the South Newport River. The kayaker was located by a good Samaritan search party on the South Newport River. He was transported

to Public Pier boat ramp and transferred to Eagle Neck Air Strip where an Air Station Savannah MH-65 helicopter crew transported him to Savannah Memorial Hospital in stable condition.

Coast Guard Sector Charleston watchstanders received a notification from a concerned family member stating the kayaker departed from his residence on the south Newport River and intended to transit Cross Tide Creek to Half Moon Marina and did not return when expected.

"The immediate and thorough response from our watchstanders, search and rescue units, state and local partners and countless volunteers made the difference in locating the kayaker safely," said Lt Michael Browning, Sector Charleston Command Center Chief. "The community came together in a tremendous way that resulted in a positive outcome."

Involved in the search were Coast Guard Air Station Savannah MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crews, Coast Guard Station Tybee Island boat crews, McIntosh County Fire Department, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Chatham County Sheriffs Office, Sea Tow.



#### New Orleans, Louisiana

The Coast Guard rescued three people who went into the water after their vessel caught fire near Dauphin Island, Alabama. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Mobile received a report of three people aboard a 36' sport fisher that caught fire in Dauphin Island Bay approximately a half mile north of Dauphin Island. Sector watchstanders directed the launch of a 29' Response Boat-Small crew from Coast Guard Station Dauphin Island to assist the people. The three people departed their vessel onto a life raft. The boatcrew arrived on scene, located the three people and transported them to Station Dauphin Island to awaiting emergency medical services in stable condition. The boatcrew transported members from Dauphin Island Fire Rescue to the burning boat to fight the fire.



#### New Orleans, Louisiana

The Coast Guard assisted a man aboard a sailing vessel beset by weather offshore of Destin, Florida. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Mobile, Alabama, received a report of a sailing vessel stuck at anchor with one person aboard in the Gulf of Mexico

approximately one mile offshore of Destin. Sector watchstanders directed the launch of a 45' Response Boat-Medium crew from Coast Guard Station Destin to assist the man. The boatcrew arrived on scene at and transported the man safely to shore.



#### Chicago, Illinois

The Coast Guard rescued two people from the water near Waukegan, Illinois. They were hoisted by an MH-60 helicopter aircrew from Air Station Traverse City. Watchstanders from Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan received a report that the operator of a sailing vessel recovered an unmanned personal watercraft approximately three miles offshore of Lake Forest Park Beach. The PWC had two cell phones, a set of keys and a wallet with identification cards aboard.

Sector Lake Michigan watchstanders issued an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast, performed call outs to missed calls from the cell phone and launched search and rescue crews. Local authorities located the missing persons' vehicle and empty PWC trailer in the marina parking lot at Naval Base Great Lakes.

A Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City MH-60 helicopter crew arrived on scene and commenced a track line search from Naval Base Great Lakes to the last known position of the PWC. Approximately two and a half miles into the search the helicopter crew located both individuals wearing lifejackets and waving their arms. The aircrew deployed the rescue swimmer, hoisted the survivors and transported them to local emergency medical services where they were treated for mild hypothermia.

Assets involved in the search included response boat crews from Coast Guard Stations Wilmette and Calumet Harbor, an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Traverse City, an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from Air Station Detroit and a C-130 crew from Joint Rescue Coordination Center Trenton.

#### San Francisco, California

The Coast Guard rescued five people from a fishing vessel approximately 14 miles southwest of the Golden Gate Bridge. The boat captain of the *Mandy Jane* fishing vessel issued a mayday call for assistance via VHF-FM Channel 16 to Coast Guard Sector San Francisco command center watchstanders after his boat began taking on water with four additional people aboard. Sector San Francisco dispatched a Coast Guard Station Golden Gate 47' Motor Lifeboat crew, the Coast Guard Cutter *Sockeye* and diverted a Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew to respond.

The helicopter crew arrived on scene, located the fishing vessel and found that four crewmembers had embarked in a survival raft while the captain remained on the fishing vessel. Shortly after the helicopter crew arrived on scene a San Francisco pilot boat, a tugboat and a good Samaritan vessel arrived on scene to assist with the rescue.

The Dolphin's rescue swimmer was lowered from the helicopter and assisted the four passengers and the boat captain from the survival raft onto the 47' Motor Lifeboat.

"Emergencies at sea can happen very quickly and are often far from help," said Capt Marie Byrd, the Coast Guard Sector San Francisco commander. "The preparation and steadfast thinking of the captain and crew of the *Mandy Jane* to call for help, don survival suits and deploy their life raft positively saved their lives. We are also grateful for the Good Samaritan, tug and pilots who quickly responded to *Mandy Jane's* calls for help. With their quick response, the proactivity of the crew and the efforts of our Coast Guard rescue crews, we were able to safely recover the people from this dangerous situation."



#### Eureka, California

The Coast Guard medevaced a man from a fishing vessel near the Humboldt Bay entrance channel. A crew member aboard the fishing vessel *Elly* notified Coast Guard Sector Humboldt Bay watchstanders that their vessel was sinking near the south jetty of the Humboldt Bay entrance channel. The watchstanders dispatched a Coast Guard Station Humboldt Bay 47' Motor Lifeboat crew and a Coast Guard Air Station Humboldt Bay MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew to respond.

The Dolphin crew utilized a direction finding radio to find the vessel's emergency position indicating radio beacon and located a debris field in the surf line south of the jetty guiding them to the vessel's life raft and crew on the beach. The helicopter crew lowered the rescue swimmer to evaluate the condition of the crew. One crew member with a reported head injury was medevaced to St Joseph's Hospital in Eureka. The two uninjured crew members were retrieved by a Humboldt County Sheriff's Deputy who had also responded to the scene.

"This case is a great example of how having the right survival equipment aboard

and being proficient in its use saves lives," said Cmdr Brendan Hilleary, the Sector Humboldt Bay chief of response. "The vessel's crew recognized the severity of their situation, made a distress call on their VHF radio, activated a properly registered EPIRB, wore personal flotation devices and abandoned ship into their life raft. They did everything right to help our crews get to them quickly and accurately."

#### North Bend, Oregon

A Coast Guard boat crew rescued four people from a commercial fishing vessel that sank in Coos Bay. The 40' *Darean Rose* capsized and sank shortly after leaving the fuel pier at the Charleston Marina with four people aboard who reported sustaining minor injuries. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector North Bend were notified that the vessel had run aground and capsized right after departing the pier.

A Coast Guard Station Coos Bay 29' Response Boat-Small crew responded to the scene and rescued the four individuals from the vessel in ten minutes. The survivors were transferred back to the pier and treated by emergency medical service technicians for minor scrapes and bruises.

The vessel has an estimated maximum potential of 1,200 gallons of diesel fuel on board. Coast Guard personnel from the Sector Columbia River Emergency Management Division responded to the potential for environmental pollution by deploying hard boom and absorbent pads. The vessel's owner is working through insurance to contract commercial salvage for the cleanup process. The cause of the incident is under investigation.



#### Astoria, Oregon

A 26' Coast Guard Trailerable Aids to Navigation Boat capsized near Pier 39 in Astoria. Four Coast Guardsmen were aboard the vessel conducting routine operations when the capsizing occurred. The vessel reportedly encountered a series of heavy wakes that came over the bow which resulted in an unrecoverable starboard list that capsized the vessel.

Watchstanders at the 13th Coast Guard District command center in Seattle received four Personal Locator Beacon alerts registered to Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team Astoria. The beacons' positions correlated with multiple good Samaritans' reports of visual distress signals in the vicinity of Pier 39 in Astoria. Correlating reports were also received by Astoria 911 dispatch. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River issued an urgent marine information broadcast (UMIB) and directed a Coast Guard Air Station Astoria MH-60 Jayhawk crew and a Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment 47' Motor Lifeboat crew to respond.

Crew members aboard the Columbia Bar Pilot vessel *Connor Foss* contacted the

Coast Guard reporting they had recovered the four Coast Guardsmen from the water after responding to the UMIB and were enroute to awaiting medical personnel at the 17th Street pier. Clatsop County Sheriff Marine Unit assisted in the recovery by towing the capsized vessel to the 17th Street pier.

All persons involved were reported to be in healthy condition after being evaluated at Columbia Memorial Hospital. The Coast Guard is overseeing salvage operations and has initiated the mishap board review process.



#### Long Beach, Washington

The Coast Guard rescued a man after his sailing vessel became disabled dangerously close to the surf near Peacock Spit about one mile from the shore near Cape Disappointment. The man contacted watchstanders at Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment by cell phone. His 36' sailing vessel had lost power and the mast had fallen, causing the vessel to become adrift in proximity of the waters of the Cape Disappointment bar.

Coast Guard Sector Columbia River watchstanders were notified as crew members aboard a 47' Motor Lifeboat diverted from training operations nearby. An MH-65 Dolphin rescue helicopter crew from Coast Guard Sector North Bend was also transiting the area and diverted to render assistance. The aircrew first located the distressed vessel and initially intended to provide on scene weather information and vector in the 47' MLB crew which was enroute.

The sailing vessel's mast had fallen, preventing the man from entering the cabin for shelter from the harsh elements. Additionally, the vessel's loss of power and inability to maneuver was deemed reason enough for the aircrew to hoist the man from the vessel rather than wait for the MLB crew to arrive. The rescue swimmer deployed and helped hoist the man from the vessel. The aircrew transported the man to Air Station Astoria where further action to recover the disabled vessel was set to take place as weather conditions dissipated.

The man was reportedly in healthy condition at Air Station Astoria. An incident management team is monitoring the situation to prevent or mitigate any environmental impact.



### Juneau, Alaska

The Coast Guard suspended its search for five missing fishermen in the waters near Sutwik Island, Alaska. The search spanned over 20 hours, 1,400 square miles and included the following assets, four MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crews, two HC-130 Hercules airplane crews and the Coast Guard Cutter *Mellon* (WHEC 717).

"The decision to suspend an active search and rescue case is never easy and it's only made after careful consideration of a myriad of factors," said Rear Adm Matthew Bell, 17th District Commander. "Our deepest condolences to the friends and families impacted by this tragedy." After exhausting all leads and careful consideration of survival probability, the Coast Guard suspends an active search pending new information or developments.

Watchstanders at the 17th District Command Center in Juneau had been notified of a mayday call via high frequency radio from the fishing vessel *Scandies Rose* which capsized and sank approximately five miles southeast of Sutwik Island. MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and HC-130 Hercules airplane crews launched from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak. The Jayhawk helicopter crew arrived on scene and rescued two survivors from a life raft. The survivors were taken to the hospital in Kodiak where they were reported to be in stable condition.

### Houston, Texas

The Coast Guard rescued two mariners from their disabled sailing vessel *Rhapsody* approximately 288 miles east/southeast of

Corpus Christi, Texas. Watchstanders at the Eighth Coast Guard District command center received an emergency position indicating radio beacon alert and directed the launch of a Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew and diverted the LPG tanker *Sahara Gas* to investigate the location.

Once on scene, the LPG tanker *Sahara Gas* reported two people aboard a 37' sailing vessel disabled after an engine room fire. Weather on scene was reported as 17-23mph winds and 10' seas. The tanker was unable to lower a lifeboat to render assistance due to 10' seas. The air crew of the HC-144 Ocean Sentry arrived on scene and established a communications schedule with the two mariners aboard the *Rhapsody*.

With weather deteriorating, an Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew was launched to conduct a hoist as well as an Aviation Training Center Mobile HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew to provide communications support. The MH-65 helicopter crew hoisted the two mariners and transferred them to Air Station Houston.

"The success of this rescue was heavily reliant on our strong partnerships," said Petty Officer 1st Class Ralph Wilkinson, an operations specialist at the Eighth Coast Guard District command center. "From the good Samaritan LPG tanker *Sahara Gas*, which remained on scene with the vessel, to the offshore platforms that supported the refueling of our MH-65 throughout the journey, to the multiple Coast Guard units involved, we were stronger together and two mariners are out of danger because of it."

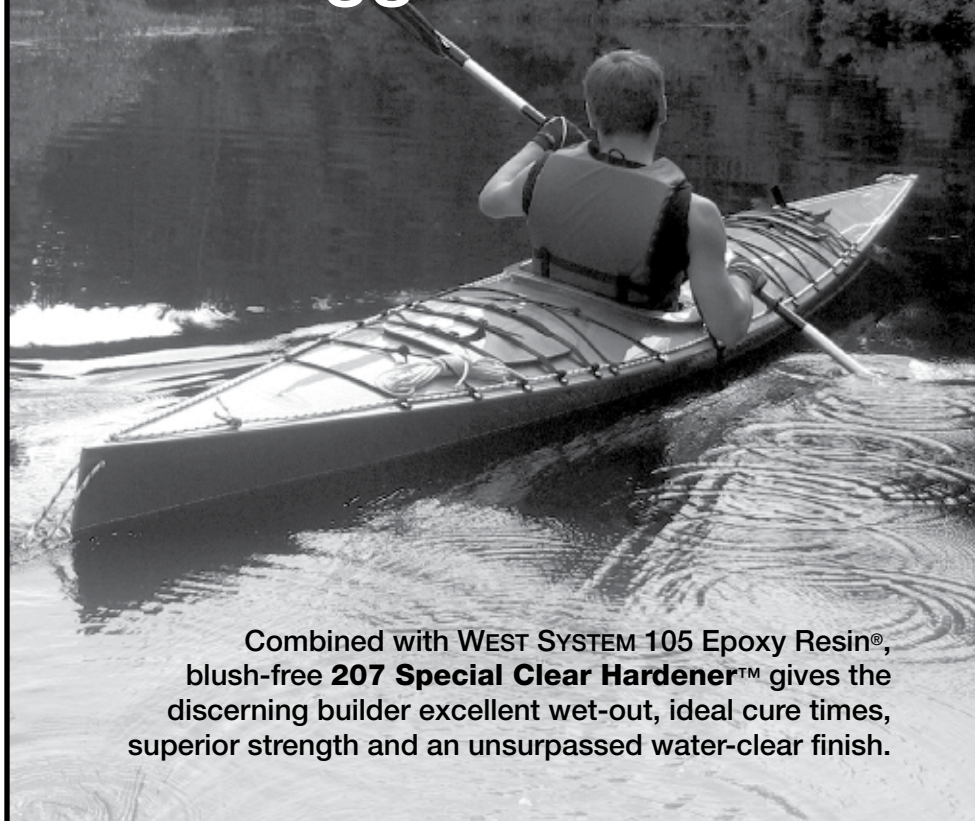


### Bodega Bay, California

Motor Lifeboat 47305 from CG station Bodega Bay cuts through a wave near Dillon beach in Northern California. Crewmembers from Station Bodega train in heavy weather and seas in order to be ready to perform search and rescue operations during real life emergencies.



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## White Fleet

Vanna White, of Wheel of Fortune fame, christened the newest Carnival ship, *Carnival Panorama*, a 4,000-passenger ship that has every entertainment feature known to mankind. This megaship will be based on the West Coast rather than the lucrative East Coast. The company believes that the Left Coast people will flock to this "Fun Ship" rather than have to pay for airfare to the Right Coast.

This ship comes complete with rec centers, wall climbs, trampolines, two swimming pools, miniature golf, a water park, two musical shows and a gymnasium. Carnival proudly boasts that it is a noisy ship with a casino and a myriad of bands playing all over the ship. It has a plethora of restaurants ranging from the most upscale steakhouse to sushi bars to Italian to a rib shack to its own brewery. What it does NOT offer is a quiet, peaceful journey at sea.

Writing from Turku, Finland, Scott McCartney writes in the *Wall Street Journal* that cruise liners are becoming exponentially larger, more expensive, more entertaining, less fuel efficient and catering to more demands by passengers. He cites the Carnival's *Mardi Gras*, a \$1 billion plus extravaganza that will carry 6,600 people, as an example. Officials report that in order to make the ship more cozy they must add atriums and plazas, multi-functional areas in which screens can be lowered for movies or shows, a three story glass wall allowing viewing on a grand scale and developing six different "neighborhoods, each with their own theme, music, entertainment and restaurants."

Carnival owns its own brand, Princess, Cunard, Costa, Holland American, Seabourn and other lines noted that 32 million people took a cruise last year and they expect a 7% increase this year. Their data indicate that many are repeat customers who are looking for the next step up in pleasure. They also indicate that many people are looking for shorter cruises. This is big, big business.

The Norwegians say "Uff Da" when words fail them in descriptive conversation, and Uff Da is totally appropriate for the massive collision of two super cruise liners from the same company. The *Carnival Glory* and *Carnival Legend* collided as one was trying to berth next to her sister ship at the pier in Cozumel, Mexico. While news reports say the *Glory* rammed the *Legend*, videos show the opposite. The bow of the *Legend* hit the starboard stern destroying a fourth deck dining room and wrecked the spaces underneath on the third deck. Six were injured as officials were trying to evacuate the dining room.

Neither ship was damaged enough to cancel their cruises but passengers were told it would be good for them to spend the entire day ashore. No doubt the bars and souvenir shops were happy with that news.

Disney Cruise Lines was hammered for \$4 million when sued by a former employee who was injured while serving one of their ships. She was in the Bahamas when she was struck by a car. She immediately reported to the ship's doctor who said she was fine and sent her back to work as a food server. When she returned home it was discovered she had several broken ribs and other internal injuries that forced her to quit work.

The court found Disney guilty of neglect. The jury gave the victim \$1 million for medical costs and pain, \$2 million for lost wages and \$1 million as punishment. This is the first time Disney Cruise Lines ever lost a



## Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.  
(Doc) Regan

personal injury suit because its legal department is larger than most cities. Would you call this a "Mickey Mouse suit?"

### Environment

The top ten environmental violations by cruise lines in the last decade:

#10 Louis Hellenic *Sea Diamond* ran aground dumping 300 tons of oil and killing two people. Fined \$1.5 million.

#9 Holland America's *Ryndam* dumped 40,000 gallons of raw sewage in Juneau, Alaska, harbor. Fined \$1 million.

#8 Holland America's *Rotterdam* discharged oil 13 times in 10 days through a permanent "magic pipe." Fined \$2 million.

#7 Royal Caribbean convicted of seven counts of illegal dumping of hazardous materials. Fined \$3.5 million.

#6 *Sovereign of the Sea* was fined \$8 million for illegal dumping of wastewater and oil in Puerto Rico. Fined \$8 million.

#5 Carnival Cruise Lines had six ships dumping illegal materials. Fined \$18 million.

#4 Royal Caribbean found guilty of nine ships dumping oil and wastewater over six jurisdictions. Fined \$18 million.

#3 Carnival found guilty of violating probation 800 times. Fined \$20 million.

#2 Cunard's *Royal Viking* severely damaged a reef. Egypt seized the ship as penalty.

#1 Princess Cruise Lines committed multiple felonies including dumping 4,200 gallons of oil, falsifying logs and additional crimes by subsidiaries. Fined \$40 million and five years of auditing.

Not all environmental news is bad. The Interior Least Tern is back from extinction after a 50% decline due to loss of habitat, global warming, damming rivers and pesticides. Three species of the tern, which lives in freshwater areas, are about to be taken off the Endangered List.

Sometimes something that looks like a great plan on paper runs into unforeseen problems. Empire Builder Investments had this fantastic idea that the scorched, thirsty and dry Southwest could use water from the Mt Simon aquifer in Minnesota. All they had to do was to transport water by rail from the wilds of Mosquito World to the deserts of Arizona. Unfortunately for these brilliant thinkers, the Minnesota DNR calculated they would double the daily amount of water taken from the reservoir and they squashed the concept.

Folks who pay attention to such matters know how badly the Colorado River was damaged in order for Los Angeles to bathe. Too often the migration of people is not good for the environment where they wish to live. The sinkholes taking out whole houses in Florida are fine examples. But folks want to live in Florida, whereas Iowa has land, water, natural resources, outstanding education but there seems to be no massive flow of people into the state. Maybe it could be those -30° winters and tons of snow. Perhaps.

## Yachts

Dutch builder Fendship recently launched its newest super megayacht, the *Arrow*. At a measly 150' length and 36' beam, this baby comes with backlit marble and highly polished teak everywhere. It features low glass railings, a mosaic jacuzzi and a beach club bar on the aft deck. It is on my birthday list.

Meanwhile, over at Arcadia Yachts a small 75' yacht of wild design also saw water for the first time. It has an unusual well rounded semi displacement steel bow that is reminiscent of a tugboat and can attain speeds of "the mid teens." The aesthetics of this boat are quite unique. You either really love the unique design or will shudder in dismay.

During the yacht construction depression of 2007, a precursor to the overall worldwide recession of 2008, everyone viewed Arcadia as dead in the water. The company's desire for modern, artistic designs were seen as a definite fatality. With great surprise to all, Arcadia not only survived but flourished to this day. What do business gurus know?

Abeking and Rasmussen's *Excellence* 80m yacht also brings an artistic perspective to a boat. With a bow that is shaped like a sheepsfoot blade, this luxury raft looks like it could slice cheese for a wine party. This reversed bow is unmistakable in a world where you pay for uniqueness. Rather ironic for a sumptuous yacht, it lacks a heliport but it does have "acres of glass" and circular pods on cutaway decks for entertainment. The aluminum hull, that expands and contracts easily, required significant architectural attention to handle 1.3 tons of layered and insulated glass. The ship has only one standard door on the entire vessel.

The owner, who made a modest income as a car dealer, wanted the design to reflect his profession so the entertainment pods are to resemble automobile tires while tire-like black and white concentric circles on the deck, ventilators looking like a car grill and tire track carvings on the wooden panels all provide a reminder of where he made his money. The boat also features a spiral staircase looking nautically like a nautilus. The owner's suite features ebony panels and a wool carpet with high tread areas covered with oak. Mirrors extend the sight lines. The coffee table is Golden Onyx so people can put their feet up. This, I believe, is the definition of wealth.

### Gray Fleet

The 77-year lost British U-class submarine *HRS Urge* was found 400' deep in waters off Malta. The 400' sub with a crew of 44 disappeared after sinking a German tanker, crippling the Italian battleship *Vittorio Veneto* and deep sixing the *Bando Nere*. While the submarine was originally created strictly as a training vessel, the exigencies of war demanded combat missions.

The boat was originally paid for by the people of Wales and commanded by E.F. Tomkinson. His grandson, Francis Dickenson, was a leader in the search for the wreck. As thought, the submarine ran into a German-laid mine field and lost its bow, sinking rapidly, allowing no escape. The boat sits upright and in excellent condition according to scientists with the Maltese search group. The boat has been resting there since April 1942.

Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly announced the addition of two Block 5 Virginia-class submarines to be built and



named after two battleships that were totally lost at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The *USS Arizona* (SSN-802) and the *USS Oklahoma* (SSN-803) will cost approximately \$2.2 billion and will be constructed by General Dynamics Electric Boat with assistance by Huntington Ingalls. Each sub will have 28 tomahawk missile tubes.

Before some of you historians start to complain about the loss of two battleships, technically the *USS Utah*, that still sits underwater in Hawaii, was a target ship and not considered an element of the fleet.

The Navy announced that the 2nd Fleet is now operational. This unique fleet has no geographical boundaries as do all the other US fleets, in no small part due to the increase of Russian submarines operating where they have never been seen before. VADM Andrew Lewis stated that Russia and China are the top threats to America and the open Arctic Ocean has drawn considerable interest with those two nations. The exact makeup of the fleet is quite secret, however, the Maritime Operations Center is in Keflavik, Iceland.

If you wonder where your taxes go, look no further than the Middle East. "In Dire Straits: Implications of the US-Iran Tensions for the Global Oil Market," a report from the Center for New American Security (whatever that is) noted that the top Navy expense comes from carrier task group operations in the region. General Ken McKenzie (USMC) is charged with the mission of keeping the waterways through the Straits of Hormuz open for all traffic, especially tankers carrying their precious cargo to Europe and Asia who are very reliant on Middle East oil. The Pentagon seconded the report saying that a goodly portion of Navy budget goes to protecting ships in the Middle East.

Interestingly, France and Germany, both dependent on that oil, have stayed on the sidelines because of ongoing rifts with the White House. They particularly are upset about the President's withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear agreements.

### Inland Waterways

Floods remain the prime topic of interest among folks on the Inland Waters. St Paul set a record of 42 days in flood condition and Rock Island suffered the second worst flood in history. Nebraska finally found her shores dry after nine continuous months of flooding. But the real problem facing people on the Missouri River is the saturated soil. In December 2019 the soil could not handle any moisture and NOAA experts said the 2020 spring floods are almost a sure thing. All Midwest waters are very high and the soil so waterlogged that winter snowmelt will be impossible to contain.

One of the things creating all this flooding was the excessive snowfall, especially in the Rockies, during 2018 which made the floods of 2019 inevitable. A Bomb Cyclone in late March was the primary culprit. And it isn't any better now.

The floods on the Tennessee/Tombigbee pulled 400,000 cubic yards of sediment downriver where it piled up on the Aberdeen Lock and Dam. The Arkansas River set its record for flooding as well.

The American Waterways Operators has its own little war going on with the US Customs and Border Protection over the governmental eroding of the Jones Act that requires any ship operating between US ports must be American built, American flagged and

American crewed. The AWO maintain that the CBP has not enforced mandates that have been promised them by President Trump. Ironically, 55 members of Congress from BOTH parties have signed a letter of complaint to the CBP. And they say bipartisan-ship is dead!

The excursion boat *Pearl of the Lake* came to rescue of two canoers whose craft sank in 5' waves on the Mississippi. The cruise boat was half mile away but immediately went into Man Overboard mode. They tried to lower a ramp but the wind and waves made it impossible so the crew tossed life preservers to the swimmers and pulled them to safety.

At the conclusion of a Messabout on Lake Pepin at Lake City, Minnesota, we campers found the NE winds so wicked that 5' waves were smacking us right in the face. None of us could get off the beach. Some tried to float downstream to an area where they could land and load. I tried to buck the wind with my West Wight Potter 15 with a 5hp Mariner and was pushed downstream so fast that I hit speeds I don't want to remember. I stuck around for several hours until the winds died down enough to chug up to a landing. The Mississippi River can get really mean when the wind and current decide to play with you. I blame the River Gods who sometimes get bored and want to play some games. In the pinball game of life, sometimes you are the lever and sometimes you are the ball.

Anyone who plays golf know there are myriad kinds of sand. In Iowa we have pebbles in our sand traps, in Florida they have fine white grains on their championship courses. In certain spots in Iowa and Wisconsin we sprout really good sand that is used in oil fracking. Texas and other areas find that their own sand is fine and less costly in transporting. The resultant economic decline in the Midwest is interesting.

Tiny Clayton, Iowa, a crossroads town of a couple of bars and a boat landing, had a massive sand mine that employed 350 18 months ago in a county that only has about 10,000 people. Before Christmas 80 people lost their jobs there.

Wisconsin is no better off. Silica Sand Inc went belly up because it could not secure bonds necessary to cover insurance expenses demanded by the state in case of clean up or emergency issues. Isn't there some sort of saying about sand castles?

### Merchant Fleet

The Bosphorus, the narrow opening that separates Asia from Europe at Istanbul, Turkey, tends to be the site of numerous accidents. Between 1953 and 2002 over 460 incidents occurred, mostly collisions. Turkish officials are pushing for a canal to reduce the number of ships sailing through the Bosphorus; but the actuality of that happening are fairly dim.

*Songa Iradium*, a Liberian flagged ship, lost power and ran aground in Istanbul, stirring up the political argument about a canal. The ship had a crew of 19 and a pilot. The bow hangs over a sidewalk and pedestrians must duck underneath the overhang in order to pass.

The Matson Co has launched the first of two Kanaloa-class combination container/Ro-Ro ships that cost about \$250 million. The *Lurline* is 870' in length with a beam of 114' and a draft of 38'. With her LNG main and auxiliary engines, the ship can main-

tain a speed of 23 knots. General Dynamics NASSCO built her and is building a sister ship. *Lurline* is the second ship so named within the company. Captain William Matson's second ship in 1887 was the first.

The Port of Stockholm received the first straddle carrier from the Chinese company, ZPMC. This derrick will allow four containers on top of each other to be placed on ships with ease. Although initially they will be manually operated, eventually they will be automated. These straddle carriers will replace the CTS terminals at Frihammen in Stockholm and they will operate at the new Norvik Park once a railroad tunnel is completed interconnecting various branches of the Port of Stockholm.

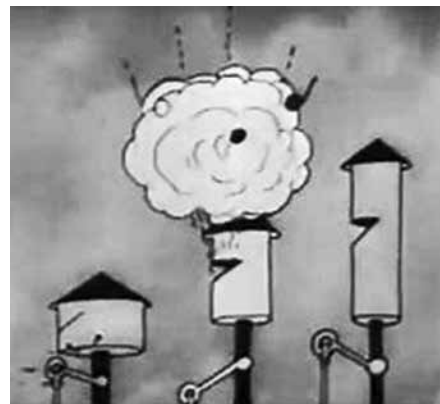
### History

The popular sternwheeler steamship *Southland*, a favorite on the Evansville/Nashville/Paducah route, easily recognized for her very thin smokestacks and distinctive high pitched soprano whistle that "needed to be cultivated as a taste, much like eating oysters." That whistle was legendary along the river but her story lies in folklore on the banks of the Mississippi.

The Italian whistle was, according to tales, "liberated" from its foreign vessel by the crew of the *Eugene*, tied up next to the original boat in New Orleans. The River Gods demand punishment and the *Eugene* caught a snag and sank within weeks. The salvaged whistle found its way to Evansville, Indiana, and found a home on the *Hettie Gilmore* but quickly switched to the sidewheel *Tarascon*.

Italians heard that unique whistle and immediately filed a lawsuit for its return. Unfortunately, the courts stated that it was sold by people who bought it legitimately and later legally resold.

The whistle moved from boat to boat including the *James Guthrie*, the *Tell City*, and *Nashville* before finding itself on the *Southland*. The Great Depression took its toll among paddle wheelers and the *Southland* was laid up in Spottsville, Kentucky. Several boats caught fire in a massive conflagration in which *Southland* and her incredible whistle were destroyed, both gone but never forgotten.



As Ratty says in Kenneth Graham's book *The Wind in the Willows*, "Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats." He was right! What's more, it doesn't take a large or expensive boat to enjoy being out on the water. Less is often more for "simply messing about." A small and light craft that can be carried on top of a car and be launched on the water ten minutes after stopping at the lake may get more use than some huge snarling powerboat which can be difficult to trailer and launch, not to mention pay for. Instead of working overtime to pay for the gas guzzling ski boat, grab a little rowboat and head out for a quiet evening paddle among the lily pads as the sun sets.

Why bother to build your own? One reason is low cost. A perfectly decent little craft can be built for \$300. Another is that you can make something that can't be found in a store. Pirogues, rowboats and small skiffs for sail and oar are perhaps the very best for simply messing about and these types are hard to find, at least where I live. The best reason is creating self reliance and personal growth. No matter how modest a boat may be, using a craft you constructed yourself will be more satisfying than any store bought boat.

As Thomas Firth Jones put it in his book, *Boats To Go*, "A hundred years ago Americans often made their own boats as well as houses, clothing and furniture. Today many Americans don't even cook their own food and don't know how. The free time this gives them is partly spent in a second job, making enough money to pay the people who cook and build boats for them, and partly spent in selecting and buying merchandise. This is a hollow life with shallow and fleeting satisfaction, ever increasing dissatisfaction and no possibility of personal fulfillment. The greatest benefit of work is not the wage or even the product, but the chance to learn and grow." Enough philosophy, let's build a boat!

The first step is to pick one. There are hundreds of designs for small craft and choosing among them can be difficult. Select one suitable for where you live. If the nearest water is a swamp, build a pirogue for wending through the trees, not a deep draft sailboat. Select a boat that you can load up, launch and use yourself. If you need to corral a bunch of friends or family to use it, the boat will spend far more time in the yard than on the water. Make sure you can haul it with the car you already have.

The next consideration is how difficult is the design to build? Traditional craft usually require "lofting" the lines full size and "spiling" the planks to fit which can be difficult for a beginner and can take a long time to build. The easiest to build are "Instant Boats," a term coined by Phil Bolger and Dynamite Payson, which are made by simply cutting plywood panels to shape and fastening them together. These designs are intended to be inexpensive and rapidly built which makes them perfect for beginners.

I've paddled canoes for decades and decided I wanted a small sailboat that could make use of the wind instead of always fighting it as one does in a canoe. I studied dozens of designs and settled on a small flat iron skiff by David Beede called Summer Breeze. Free plans and instructions are found on his website, [Simplicityboats.com](http://Simplicityboats.com). I've happily discovered that this little skiff rows easily, sails surprisingly well, weighs about 100lbs

## Build a Boat of Your Own

By Robert Van Putten

and has a useful capacity of about 400lbs. It is 11½' long by 4' wide with a flat, rockered (curved front to back) bottom.

Materials needed are three sheets of exterior grade ¼" plywood, a few 2"x4"s, some waterproof glue and nails or screws. Like all "Instant Boats" it is made by bending preshaped sides around a center frame and connecting them to a triangular "stem" in front and a trapezoidal "transom" in the back. Then the bottom is cut to fit and fastened on. The sides are made from a single 4'x8' sheet of plywood.

Start by laying it out according to the drawing on David's website. Be real sure to mark everything, including where the center frame will fasten to the sides. When done, go back and check it all again before cutting anything!



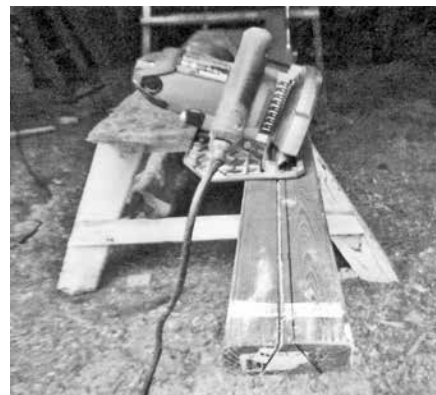
The best tool to cut out the shapes is a circular saw set for a shallow cut, but any saw will do. The parts that make up the sides will have to be glued together. This is done with "butt straps" made from strips of plywood glued and screwed, nailed or stapled down over the joints and weighted until the glue dries. Pay close attention to the plans, we want the butt blocks on the inside of the finished boat. Use plenty of glue and put waxed paper under and over the joints so you don't glue the planks to the floor. I did this in my hayloft but it can be done outside on your driveway in good weather.



Joining the side pieces together with butt blocks, I used short brass screws and lots of Titebond II glue. Let the sides dry and make the stem, center frame and transom according to the plans. The transom has sides and bottom cut at an angle with a circular saw or table saw. This is the hardest part, if you can make this you can make a boat. It took me three tries to get this part right because I kept cutting the angles the wrong way and I learned a lot about carpentry in the process. I got fancy and made it more complicated than need be, with a curved top and center reinforcement.



The triangular stem for the boat is cut from a scrap of lumber with the circular saw adjusted to the right angle.



Time to put the hull together. This can be done on sawhorses or on the floor blocking it up as needed with scraps of wood. Do a dry run first, putting it together with a few temporary fastenings. Start by attaching the center frame to one side on the marks you drew back when laying out the pieces. Now attach the other side to the center frame and bend the bow in and screw it to the triangular stem. Bend in the back sides and screw to the transom. You can see in the photo how I used drywall screws with small pads of plywood as temporary fastenings. This prevents sinking the drywall screws in and marring the wood.

Suddenly our pile of parts looks like a boat! Time to step back, admire it and check everything for fit and alignment. You don't want to build a twist into the boat. Stretch a string from the bow to the center of the transom and make sure both halves look symmetrical. If not, you'll have to loosen some screws and push it around a little until it looks good. When happy with the way it looks, undo the temporary fastening from one part at a time, slather on lots of glue and fasten it for real. I used brass screws but decking screws or galvanized nails work, too.



For whatever reason, the framing we screw the bottom onto is called "chine logs." These go on the outside of the boat and are strips of wood 12' long and about ¾" square with one side cut at an angle to match the bottom. To make these, paw

through the stacks of 2"x4"s and 2"x6"s at Home Depot to find one that you can cut some knot free  $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips off of. You can't do this at a lumberyard but nobody cares at the big box stores. Use a circular saw with a ripping guide or table saw and slice off a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide strip. Now you have a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ "x $\frac{3}{4}$ " strip 12' long. Adjust the saw to the right angle (18° on this boat) and slice that strip in half. This should give you two chine logs.

Working with the boat upside down, do a dry run and clamp the logs on flush with the bottom of the sides. They need to take a bend in two directions and if they are going to crack we want them to do it now, not after they're glued and nailed on. If they didn't crack, glue, clamp and nail or screw the chine logs on permanently. Having plenty of clamps handy really helps with this step.

The bottom of the chine logs and side panels need to be flat to attach the bottom to, and this is why we cut the chine logs at an 18° angle as it saves a lot of work at this stage. You'll still need to clean up spots for a good fit with a block plane, rasp, belt sander or whatever tool works for you. Use a straight stick across the bottom to check the fit. Cut off the excess where the chine logs run past the bow and stern.



Fitting the bottom is easy. Slap a piece of plywood in place, weight it or clamp it so it doesn't move around and trace the outline of the bottom with a pencil. Take it off and cut it out with the circular saw.

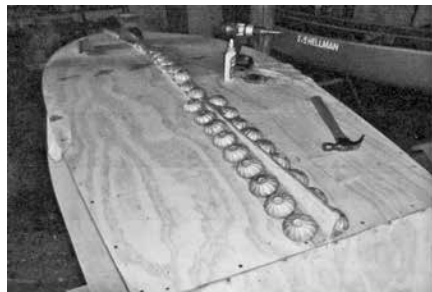


The whole bottom can't be covered with a single 4'x8' sheet of plywood, we'll need to add a piece of another sheet with a butt block. This is done right in place on the boat. Slide the butt strap in place and put the bottom sheets on top of it. Then from inside the boat mark where to cut the butt block to fit.



Glue and screw one part of the bottom on, add the butt block, then the next part of the bottom. Use lots of glue and screws, we don't want any leaks.

Next add a keel to stiffen the bottom and a small fin called a "skeg" to help the boat go straight. The keel is a 1"x4" laid flat on the bottom. The skeg is made by laminating two pieces of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood leftover from the first sheet together with lots of glue. The underside of the skeg is trimmed to fit the curve of the bottom of the boat and the keel has a 24" long slot cut in the end to fit the skeg. Put the keel on the bottom of the boat and mark around it with a pencil. Remove it and drill screw pilot holes through the bottom. Slather on the glue, put the keel and skeg in place, put lots of weight on top to hold it down, then put screws into the keel from inside the boat.



Turn the boat upright for the finishing touches. Strips of wood called "gunwales" are attached to the top sides to stiffen them, just as we added chine logs to the bottom. I put heavy "wales" both inside and outside the boat, which isn't necessary. In fact, this boat can weigh as little as 80lbs but mine tips the scales at 112lbs because I got carried away with the odds and ends. Finish the boat out with mast step and partner, leeboard, corner braces, breast hook and maybe thwarts, but try not to get carried away! This isn't supposed to be a piece of heirloom woodwork, just something to mess about in.

To seal the wood the boat was painted inside and out with Bondo polyester resin thinned with acetone, then painted with a variety of free paints from the recycle center. After a year of use I did put a strip of fiberglass tape over the outside of the chine logs and a year after that I went and fiberglassed the whole bottom of the boat, which isn't a bad idea on a plywood boat.

I made oars by ripping a 6' 2"x4" in half lengthwise, rounding and tapering the shafts and adding blades made from leftover  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood. I whittled wooden pins to tie the ropes and oars to instead of buying cleats and oarlocks. The mast, yard and boom were made from cedar saplings and a

sail cut to the provided pattern from a discarded tarp I pulled from a dumpster. The sail was hemmed and reinforced with double sided fiberglass carpet tape and set with grommets. I find that poly tarps make good sails but when the first wore out the next was sewn, not taped together. The sail is 63sf and I added reefing ties to reduce the area to 45sf for use in high winds. To help right the boat in the event of a capsize, I strapped in 2" thick Styrofoam blocks wrapped in leftover tarp material.

But how does one get such a heavy boat up on top of a car? By lifting only half of it at a time. To move the boat about on land I made a dolly out of a length of 2"x4" with lawn-mower wheels set in the ends and affixed this to the stern with a large wing nut. Flip the boat over onto the wheels and move it about like a wheelbarrow. Put the bow up on top of the car first, then push the back on up.



I didn't think this little skiff would be much more than a learning experience to get me started in boat building, but it has exceeded all my expectations. Fun, fast and stable, it's perfect for one or two adults. I take it out dozens of times a summer and often just leave it on top of the car ready to go. When the wind chimes tinkling in our yard tell me the breeze is up, off I go to the local lake. My wife and I even took it on a three day island-hopping camp cruise. The little skiff easily crosses miles of open water that I never dared cross in a canoe. Not bad for a total cost only of \$235!



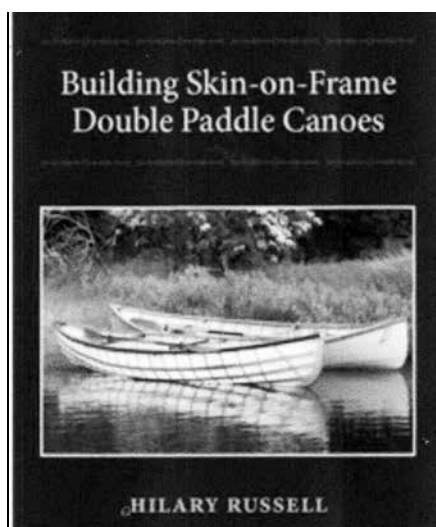


## Epilogue

An earlier version of this article appeared in *Self-Reliance Magazine*. They paid me \$350 for it so this boat has more than paid for itself! A high school senior read the article and was inspired to build one for himself. He contacted me through the magazine and we exchanged many emails. He launched his boat this summer and plans to sail down the Columbia in it. His boat is probably better built than mine, a case of "do what I say, not what I do!"



My wife lounges in the space between the center frame and mast partner.



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Trying (unsuccessfully) to stay awake on a lazy downwind run.

In June I completed the first ever Salish 100 cruise from Olympia to Port Townsend in this little skiff. This cruise covered the entire length of Puget Sound, some 100 nautical miles. I traveled with a group of about 80 other boats of all kinds, but mine was the smallest of the fleet (and by far the cheapest). Sailors had started calling this event the Salish Armada (The Salish Sea being another name for Puget Sound) so I finally came up with a name for my skiff, *La Madalena*, which was the smallest ship to take part in the Spanish Armada of 1588.

The first two days of the voyage were smooth seas and gentle winds, perfect conditions for a flat iron skiff. The next two were hot and still with much rowing. The next day was entirely too much wind and waves. After a few miles and many near capsizes, I lowered the sail and made a few more miles under oars. I was fighting to keep from being driven onto a lee shore and eventually used a cell phone to call for a tow. Small flat iron skiffs don't belong in high winds and whitecaps! After an exciting rescue at sea by a man in a 50' Diesel luxury yacht, my little skiff was towed around Point No Point and Foulweather Bluff.



*La Madalena* under tow. Not a place for a small flat iron skiff.

The last day of the sail was a mix of rip tides, light winds, rain (it's amazing how much rainwater the sail funnels into the boat!) and finally flat calm. I made Port Townsend harbor about 2pm. When I was about a mile from the dock I got a call from my ride back to Olympia where our cars were parked saying that they wouldn't wait for me, "Bye!" I was astonished! Who leaves a comrade behind like that? Thankfully I did eventually find someone going the right way and made it back to Olympia at midnight.

Since my boat is too small to sleep in I camped each night on land in locations wrangled up by the event organizer, Marty Loken. Two nights I slept in someone's back yard, twice in parks, once in an apple orchard and once in the forecandle of an old fishing boat. During the voyage I occasionally thought I might just have bitten off a little more than I should be chewing. I spent so much time on the water that after a few days I was walking like Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean* whenever I got on land. But I got to

meet interesting people from all over, see small boats of all kinds and harbor seals, porpoises, river otter and even an orca on the day I sailed lazily past a distant, misty and dreamy looking Seattle. I've already signed up for next years Salish 100, but with any luck I'll have built a bigger boat by then. Not that I'll be giving up my little *La Madalena*, it's amazing how much fun you can have in a simple little skiff.



Trying to get out of the narrow entrance of Mat Mats bay against a 3kt tide on the last day of the Salish 100 cruise.

## Recommended Reading

*Instant Boats*, 1979, *Build the New Instant Boats*, 1984, *Instant Boatbuilding with Dynamite Payson*, 2007. Once upon a time Harold "Dynamite" Payson got tired of selling plans for boats that were never built, so he collaborated with the famous naval architect Philip C. Bolger to create a whole series of "Instant Boats" built much like this one. His books remain an excellent resource and plans for a whole fleet of boats are available at [www.instantboats.com](http://www.instantboats.com).

*Boatbuilding for Beginners and Beyond*, 2002, Jim Michalak. This book is a very complete resource with building and sail making directions, plans for six boats as well as sailing and safety instruction. If you get only one book on the subject, this should be it. Jim has picked up where Payson and Bolger left off and continues to design excellent, easily built small craft. Tons of info and plans are also available at [www.jimsboats.com](http://www.jimsboats.com).

*Ultrsimple Boatbuilding*, 2008, Gavin Atkins. Seventeen plywood boats anyone can build. This is the book that got me started building a boat. Includes a chapter on the Summer Breeze, but I do recommend referring to David Beede's website for additional info on that design. Can be downloaded free at [www.mojaladja.com/upload/McGraw-Hill-Ultrsimple-Boat-Building-\(2007\).pdf](http://www.mojaladja.com/upload/McGraw-Hill-Ultrsimple-Boat-Building-(2007).pdf).





On the molds with the keelson added. Time spent fairing mold frames is time and materials saved in the fairing process. 410 Micro-light filler added to WEST SYSTEM Epoxy made for a nice fairing compound.



The hull off the mold and covered with fiberglass. The interior was faired before the fiberglass was applied.



Often pigment will be added to aid in fairing. In this case, 502 Black Pigment was used to contrast with the tan 410 Microlight Fairing Filler.

With the interior painted, the hardware was installed. It's important to seal all holes with epoxy after they are drilled.



## Building a Jericho Bay Lobster Skiff

By Brian Donaldson  
Reprinted from *Epoxyworks*

Over the past three winters, the boat building crew of the Saginaw Bay Community Sailing Association (SBCSA) strip built a Jericho Bay lobster skiff. They used the plans from *WoodenBoat* magazine which master boat builder Tom Hill measured from a Joel White designed boat. More than 20 people have worked on the skiff.

The hull was planked with western red cedar  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{4}$ " bead and cove strips covered in a 12oz layer of fiberglass on the interior. Two layers of 12oz fiberglass and WEST SYSTEM Epoxy covered the exterior. The transom is laid up of okoume marine plywood with a mahogany veneer. The stem is laminated Douglas fir and the gunnels are ash with cypress knees and breasthook. The seats are western red cedar and the steering console is painted okoume plywood with clear-finished black locust corners and a cypress dash. Everything was coated with epoxy before painting and varnishing. Much of the boat is finished bright.

It has a 2018 Mercury fuel-injected, four stroke, 20hp motor controlled by a remote start, shift and throttle, along with wheel-steering from the console. During sea trials with a prospective buyer, the boat ran 21 knots with 500lbs onboard. The bow doesn't rise up when getting on plane, the entire boat rises level to plane for a very comfortable ride.

With so many people working on the boat at different skill levels, it's difficult to keep the level of finish where one would like it. Joe Parker, a retired Gougeon Brothers employee and boat repair expert, took the boat home in late August and completed the touch ups to a high level.

The group will be selling the boat to help fund SBCSA operations. SBCSA operates as a 501(c)3 in Bay City, Michigan. The mission of SBCSA is to provide affordable sailing lessons and access to sailing for the youth and adults of the mid Michigan area to promote interest in sailing as a lifelong sport and to develop teamwork, sportsmanship and self confidence in students through experiential learning.

In addition to offering sailing lessons for youth and adults in nine Optimist Prams, five RS Fevas and four Cape Cod Daysailer 17s, they keep two keelboats at a local marina that are set up for sailing on the Saginaw Bay at no additional charge to members.

What a sweet sheer! The waterline was applied from plans. Often builders float the completed boat and mark the waterline location to paint later.



The wheel installed. The helm station is built of okoume ply with a black locust corner post and cypress dash and shelf. The seats are cedar.



The completed Jericho Skiff. The donated trailer needed attention. It was completely disassembled, cleaned, primed and painted then reassembled with new bolts, lights and tires. Its vintage styling goes well with the boat.

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I began paddling canoes and kayaks nearly 70 years ago, at that time using rented or borrowed canoes with paddles that were barely serviceable. In my teenage years, with the canoe I built myself, I bought the cheapest paddle available for money was scarce. Later, through a series of flat bottomed homebuilt family kayaks, I simply used a closet pole with plywood blades screwed to it to make a double ended paddle that was effective but not elegant. When we bought our large tripping canoe I bought two nice ash wide bladed paddles with it as recommended by the canoe builder, one for me and one slightly shorter for my wife. The builder was a whitewater enthusiast so these were the paddles he had available. Not having studied the characteristics of paddle design I was none the wiser, and at a younger age they served us well for many years.

These days I tire more quickly when paddling my canoe. At first I thought that maybe I should buy or build a super light craft, expecting that it would take less energy to move it, but the canoe I have is only 45lbs and I like it. Furthermore, it is asymmetrical, with a fine entry, and judging by how far it glides when I stop paddling, it would be hard to improve on what I have. It occurred to me that possibly a better paddle would extend my range, so I did a bit of research. I have since learned that my primary paddle, the ash wide blade model, is nearly identical to a Sugar Island paddle, one named for Sugar Island in the St Lawrence where international canoe races were once held. It is good for river canoeing, whitewater and racing, is good for steering and bracing and short duration power, but maybe not so great for an all day paddle from lake to lake as we used to do, and as I still do in a more limited way.

Somewhere along the way I bought a narrower paddle cut from one piece of maple, made near Algonquin Park in Ontario. This paddle makes for easier paddling but it moves the canoe along rather slowly. It has only a 5" blade compared to the 8" wide ash paddle, although the maple paddle is slightly longer. The grip is not as comfortable and the blade is straight sided, as if the maker was limited by the width of the wood available. I decided that I needed a new paddle suited to the way I use it and I would have to make it to get what I wanted.

I recommend the book *Canoe Paddles, A Complete Guide to Making Your Own*, by Gra-

## Make Your Own Canoe Paddle

By Hugh Groth



ham Warren and David Gidmark. It is where I learned that my ash paddle is a Sugar Island design and it has descriptions and patterns for that and many others. I did not use any of the patterns in making my paddle, nor did I follow their recommendations for choice of woods, but it was nevertheless very helpful.

The book discusses wide blade vs narrow blade, the essence of which says that a wide paddle will cause you to paddle at a slower rate because of the high level of energy expended and the length of time you can keep it up will be shorter. You can keep a rapid cadence all day with a narrow paddle, so in the long run you will paddle further before you tire. The long distance voyageurs always used long, narrow paddles.

I do not paddle the ocean, or whitewater, and I am not a racer or a marathoner. I might paddle a river, maybe take a long day trip on a lake or go overnight or more through a series of lakes, but most of the time I will paddle lakes that are not far away because they are available and the time commitment is much less. If this is you then the way I made my paddle will fit your needs.

### Material

Right away I decided to make a laminated paddle, partly because I did not have wood of the right species for a single piece paddle that was straight grained and large enough, but mostly because I wanted to use a pattern of different woods for a pleasing appearance. I also felt it would make a strong paddle that would not warp or split. Next it was a matter of determining how to use what wood I had or could obtain reasonably. In my opinion anything I make should function better, have a better appearance and cost less than anything I can buy, and that includes canoe paddles.

Ash is often the choice of paddle makers, for its characteristics of flexibility, hard-

ness and weight are a good balance. I had a bit of ash but the grain was not straight. Maple is often a second choice but I did not have maple. What I had was cherry, walnut, basswood and a bit of birch, in my mind a great combination of colors, but what about function?

I used data from the *Mechanical Engineers Handbook* in constructing Table 1 to show how these woods and others compare to ash. Cherry is lighter weight than ash, about the same strength, much more flexible and has medium hardness. The other woods can be interpreted from the table in the same way. Using this method I felt very confident about using the wood I had, except that my best piece of wood was a straight, clear cherry board that I intended to use for my full length structural piece running from the grip through to the tip of the blade. This would result in a shaft that would likely be too flexible, so I obtained a long, straight, clear piece of hickory from a local hardwood flooring manufacturer from which I could laminate thin strips to the cherry in the region of the shaft. I was ready for the next step.

### Design

The question was how to design a paddle that was durable, would function in use the way I wanted it to, yet still be a work of art. I began by entering the offset dimensions from the designs in the reference book and the dimensions I measured from my own paddles into my CADesign program to plot out the various designs of interest. These are shown side by side in Table 2. You can probably do this using manual drawing tools, but it would be slower and possibly less accurate. However, it is perspective, not accuracy that we are after at this point. The Beavertail design was the best of the lot for my purpose, but none of them was exactly what I wanted.

The reference book has a lot of good advice on paddle characteristics and performance as affected by the design. The Beavertail is the all around most popular design, but its area was nearly the same as the wide bladed models, too much for my new paddle. I also felt it was a bit "shoulder heavy" with the upper part of the blade too wide. The length was OK, for it would give the blade access to the deep water which would be more stable. The drawback was that it would be more vulnerable to rocks and to hitting

Table 2  
PADDLE BLADE DESIGNS

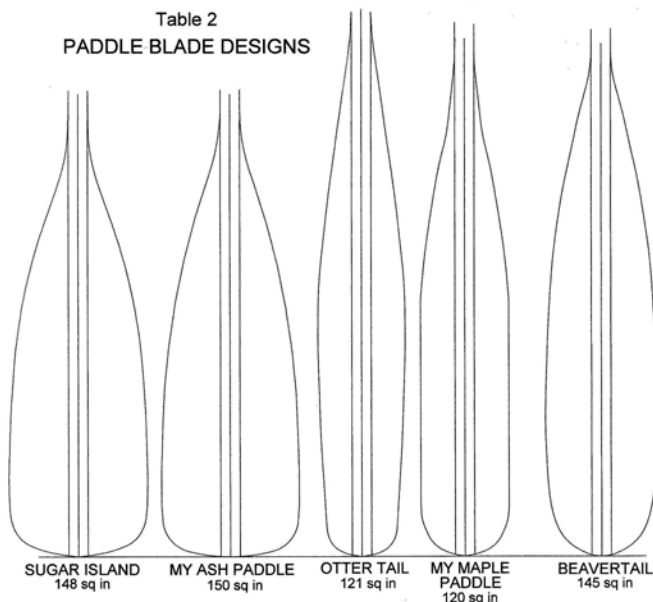


Table 1 - WOOD PROPERTIES				
Expressed as percent compared to ash wood				
	Density	Strength	Flexibility	Hardness
Ash	100	100	100	high
Basswood	62	66	121	low
Cherry	83	101	119	med
Walnut	90	118	105	med
Birch	101	113	88	high
Maple	105	107	97	high
Hickory	119	119	82	high
W. Pine	57	57	143	low
Cedar	55	60	158	low
S. Spruce	67	75	113	low



the bottom in shallow water. The rounded tip would increase its vulnerability, but would make it quieter, with less splashing on entry.

Some paddles take an opposite approach with the widest part of the blade high up. This is true for the Ottertail and Voyageur (not shown), both long and tapering toward the tip. This produces a very quiet, less tiring paddle. In addition to the efficiency of a narrower paddle, another benefit of these would be that the total moment arm produced by the force of the water against the blade would be less, making the paddle still more efficient, good for lengthy, deep water trips, but such a long blade would not be good for me and I did not like the shape as much. There are always tradeoffs in design.

I used my CAD program to revise the profile of the blade several times until I was satisfied with its appearance, but this also could be done with manual drawing tools, again more slowly with less accuracy. The result was a blade pattern of only 126 square inches, but the bottom third of the blade, where it counted for power and maneuverability, was nearly the same in area as the Beavertail, only 4% smaller. The center third was 11% smaller but the big difference was in the 28% smaller top third of the blade. I liked the appearance and I thought it might reduce the churning of the water near the surface, helping to maintain efficiency and quietness.

The shaft was another matter. Both of my current paddles have the same shaft length and it fits me well, so I simply designed that in. However, my piece of cherry was not thick enough to accommodate the shaft design thickness and solid cherry would be too flexible anyway, but it would sure look good. Fortunately I had that nice piece of hickory. Laminating a bit of it to the shaft would add a contrasting color feature, a necessary bit of stiffness and provide abrasion protection for the shaft in an area that could often bump into the gunwale of the canoe.

The layout of laminations on the blade was fun, hoping to get good appearance while being mindful of the physical characteristics of the wood. I remained with the center (spine) of cherry, red color, average weight, strong and flexible. Next was a very narrow strip of hickory, bright white, heavy, strong and stiff. Walnut, at twice the width of hickory, was added next, dark chocolate color, average weight and flexibility, strong. The widest piece was basswood, a creamy yellow, lightweight but weak and flexible. A final strip of cherry on the outer edge then protected the basswood. The result would be a stunning mix of color with good use of physical properties.

I designed a T-shaped grip using laminations of walnut and birch, completely rounded over on top, about 1" thick and symmetrical with a pocket for my thumb under both sides of the T so I could use it either way round. A grip is a very individual thing and if you are endeavoring to build your own paddle, chances are you have held and used one before. You know what will fit your hand. The way I paddle, maybe a bit different from some, is to hold the paddle very straight during the power stroke, turning it at the end in a J stroke, but then allowing it to continue turning with the grip pivoting in the palm of my upper hand as it returns. I do this on every stroke for it is comfortable for me. Therefore my grip needs to be the same side to side and front to back with a smooth rounded top so I can quickly grab it as it comes around. Table 3 shows the final design of blade and grip.



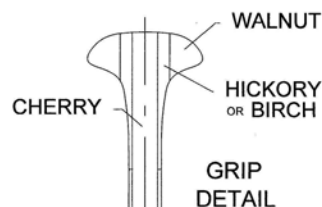
Table 3

HICKORY  
3/8

WALNUT  
3/4

BASSWOOD  
15/16

CHERRY  
13/16 SPINE



OFFSETS  
INCHES-32nds

Y	X
1	2-9
2	2-24
4	2-27
6	2-30 1/2
8	2-31
10	2-30
12	2-27 1/2
14	2-23
16	2-17
18	2-9
20	1-31
22	1-20
24	1-6
26	0-25
28	0-10

### Construction Details

Fortunately I own a bandsaw and a jointer, both good quality machines, which made this project possible for me. Maybe you could do the cutting with a table saw and jig saw, but you would need a lot of skill to produce the smooth lamination joints with a hand plane. However, a hand plane, maybe more than one and possibly a spoke shave, are indispensable in shaping the blade and shaft.

To begin with I set up the bandsaw with a 1/2" wide ripping blade and a rip fence. At this point the cutting, jointing and gluing sequence is important to obtain a straight and true paddle. My cherry board was surfaced both sides so I ripped a piece 1 1/4" wide by 61" long but left an additional length of 1"-2" for trimming and trueing later. Your shaft length might be different depending on your chosen grip span. There are many ways to determine the best shaft length, but I think the best way is to find a paddle somewhere that is comfortable, or just grab a broomstick to estimate a good span between your hands, and use that dimension.

The hickory was also surfaced all four sides, so I ripped a 3/8" wide piece, planed the cut edge of the remaining board square and smooth and ripped another, both the same length as the cherry shaft blank. I then glued the smooth wide faces of the hickory strips centered on the smooth wide faces of the cherry, gluing them one at a time to better control the centering. I wanted a water-proof glue, not water resistant, so that the integrity of the paddle would hold up if and when the protective finish was damaged. Original Gorilla Glue, a polyurethane glue which foams and expands as it cures, fits that requirement and was easy to use. I clamped

the parts tightly so that the glue forced itself into the wood fibers, creating a strong and nearly invisible bond once it was finished. You cannot use too many clamps.

With the hickory in place the shaft blank was too wide so I then used the bandsaw, with a finer toothed blade, to cut away almost half of the hickory on each side in the region of the shaft, leaving its full thickness as it ran on down through the blade and in the area of the grip. A finer toothed blade cuts more slowly, making a rather tricky cut easier to control. The result was an approximately 1 1/4" square shaft blank to be thinned and rounded later with a block plane and spoke shave.

I used the jointer to true the outer edges of the glued in place hickory in the blade region of the paddle and did the same with the walnut board. I then cut strips from the walnut and glued them in place, one at a time as with the hickory, matching finished faces. I repeated this procedure strip by strip with the different woods on out to the edge of the blade, using thinner stock as I went to reduce planing to thickness later, being sure to center each piece on the one before it, with each piece only as long as necessary to accommodate the shape of the blade. I did the same at the grip, but here I pre cut the shape of the T laminations because cutting later would be difficult. At this point I had a paddle blank, ready for smoothing and shaping with the plane and band saw.

### Getting the Right Shape

I began planing to thickness by first marking a centerline all around the edge of the paddle blank after I sighted down the length of the paddle along each edge to be sure the laminations were all centered and the shaft was in

line with all parts of the blade. I planed only enough to produce an even, smooth surface on each side before I printed the pattern, as shown in Table 3, and traced it onto the face of the blade. Then, with the finer toothed blade on the bandsaw, I cut the shape and again drew the edge centerline on the cut surface. I continued to smooth the paddle blade a little at a time on each side, turning it frequently until the spine and the edges were close to final thickness. This was not a quick process for I planed just a little at a time on each side, checking often for straightness and thickness at edges and center.

The blade is cambered in cross section, both sides alike, with the cherry piece as the spine of the blade. It starts with the shaft thickness at the top of the blade and tapers in a straight line to about 4" from the tip, at which point it flattens out at  $\frac{7}{16}$ ". On both sides of the spine, both sides of the blade, the surface is gently curved from the spine centerline down to  $\frac{9}{32}$ " at the edge for the lower 16" of the blade. Above that the shoulder of the blade is gradually thickened and rounded to blend up to the shaft at the lower grip area. I slowly worked the edges in this area until it felt good in my hand.

Most of the blade shaping was done with a smoothing plane, but on the lower grip area and shaft I used a small spoke shave which I happened to have. It takes a bit of practice to use it well but I found it to be much more accurate and faster than a block plane, although that tool was useful as well. I made the shaft slightly oval,  $1\frac{3}{16}$ " front to back and  $1\frac{1}{8}$ " side to side for most of its length. About 9" from the top of the shaft I began to thin the shaft on the front to back dimension to a little less than 1" at the base of the grip. This helps with balance, improves the appearance and results in an indented area just below the rounded top of the grip to provide a better handhold. I used the spoke shave, a file, the block plane and rough sandpaper, anything that worked, to bring the grip shape into a good fit for my hand.

The tip of the blade is the most vulnerable to damage. Unavoidable impacts wear away the varnish protection in this area and the exposed end grain quickly soaks up water. Subsequent wet and dry cycling tends to cause the tip to split so the last operation was to fit a spline into a slot at the tip to bind it together and add abrasion protection. I did this using a backsaw and cut the slot by hand using a homemade guide to keep the saw cut straight. I cut the groove about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep and a little less than  $\frac{3}{32}$ " wide, side to side across the tip, then trued it to thickness and depth with sandpaper backed with a piece of thin metal. I cut a piece of walnut and thinned it by a cut and try method until it just fit snugly into the slot, then glued it in place and clamped the tip tightly over it. Once the glue was dry I trimmed and sanded it to match the tip curvature. Using a wood spline allows the blade to breathe, or expand and contract slightly, where a metal spline would be too rigid. A plastic or metal cap would also have helped prevent abrasion but would likely trap moisture, increasing the possibility of splitting while in storage.

### Finishing

Once I had done all the tool work, making sure there were no high spots, rough spots or grain pulls, it was time to sand and sand, gradually going from a #60 grit to a final sanding with #220 grit. What can I tell you? If you have done woodworking you know this to be tedious but it is important to remove all the scratches and rough places or they will be magnified under a coat of varnish. I used a sanding block with a firm foam base over which I could quickly snap different grits of sandpaper as I needed them for I often went up and down in grit as I saw places that needed work.

If I had used an oil finish I know that I would have had a very forgiving finish which would develop a beautiful patina and be easy on the hands, but I had a laminated paddle with multiple laminations and multiple spe-

cies of wood. It needed to be sealed to keep the water out for as long as possible during its life. Wood soaking up water and drying out alternately over and over with different woods expanding at different rates would ruin the paddle. I used Helmsman gloss spar varnish, and rather than recoat after four hours as the label allows, I waited overnight to permit the surface to harden better. I used five coats of varnish, sanding lightly with #220 grit paper between coats. I realized that the slipperiness of the gloss surface could make the paddle less efficient in pulling against the water, but I opted for the hardness, long life and sealing quality of the hard gloss protection. Besides, it is a stunning finish.

### Performance

This was it, time to see if all my theories were good. I waited several days to be sure the finish was well cured, then took my canoe and all three paddles to the shore. The morning was clear and wind free, a perfect morning for paddle comparison. I started with the maple paddle, which was easy paddling as always, but a little too easy for I had to keep a rapid pace to move along well. I switched to the Sugar Island and the paddling immediately took more energy and I could feel the pull across my shoulders. It often splashed a bit as the tip entered the water. These two had always been this way, of course, but I had never thought much about it before.

I picked up my new paddle. It entered the water quietly and the canoe surged forward. The force across my shoulders was relieved, grip areas were smooth and comfortable and my funny J stroke was easy to execute. The difference was dramatic and I stayed with it for the rest of the morning's ride. In someone else's hands the result might not have been as satisfying, but this tool was made for the way I would use it and I was pleased. It was worth the effort and it looked like I would not be needing a new canoe. My quiet early morning outings might not see my former paddles again.

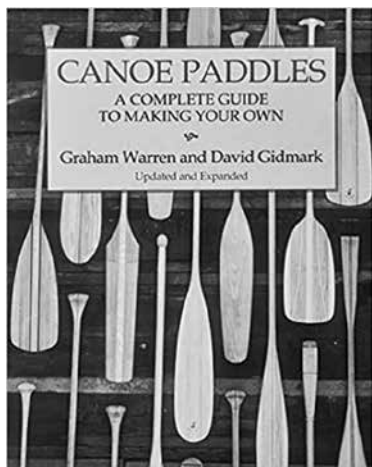
## About This Book

Despite the growing interest in making paddles and canoes, it can be difficult to find reliable information on that craft except for this book. First published more than a decade ago and having sold 35,000 copies, *Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own* is the ultimate modern guide to the traditional craft for both the how to beginner and the skilled woodworker.

In *Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own*, longtime canoeist and woodworker Graham Warren provides detailed information and guidance to make a canoe paddle that will be used with confidence and cherished for generations. The book is thoroughly illustrated with photographs, line drawings and plans with measurements for:

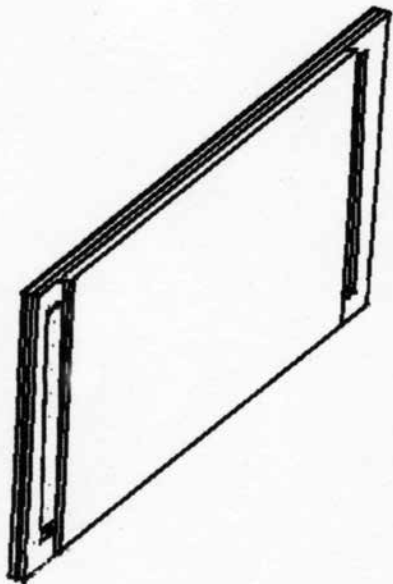
- How to make a paddle having a single blade, a bent shaft or double blades.
- How to protect a paddle with oil or varnish.
- What to look for when test driving a paddle.
- How to decorate a paddle.
- How to care for and repair a paddle.

Paperback: 176 pages; Publisher: Firefly Books; First Edition (March 3, 2001); Product Dimensions: 8.5"x 0.4"x 11". ISBN-10: 9781552095256 - ISBN-13: 978-1552095256 - ASIN: 1552095258.

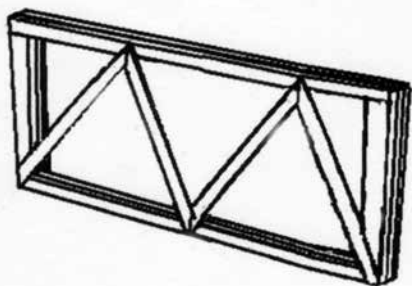


While thinking, "OK, OK, I can see I'm going to have to abbreviate something here," I may have hit on a way to combine the "rugged" factor I mentioned in Part XXXIII with a quicker and easier way to achieve it.

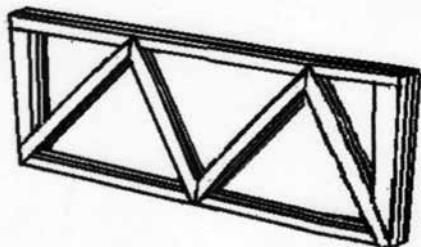
There are probably several ways that might work. One utilizes a modification of Ken Simpson's use of plywood <https://www.portableboatplans.com> (also mentioned in Part XXXIII). Here is a Microsoft Paint sketch of how I figure that might work. I would plan to leave spaces on the sides to



Another would be to multilayer just the rectangular part of the frames and then add just one layer of the triangles instead of incorporating both into one multilayered unit, like so:



Then, below is a Microsoft sketch of that idea from Part XXIII (including the layered triangles) to which I referred at the time as probably being "pretty rugged."



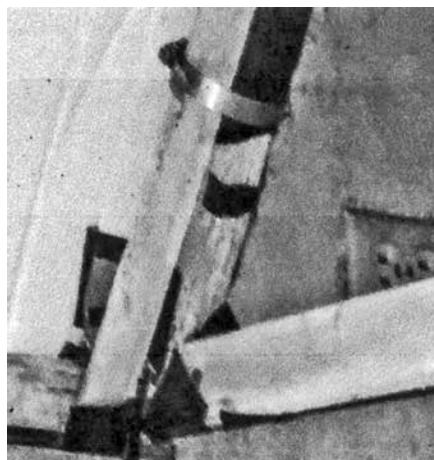
While that's probably true, the downside to this method is how time consuming it is, especially using hand tools which is what I'm doing right now. (I've thought about getting some minimal power tools but at this point I think that instead of taking the time, effort, expense, etc, to do that, maybe I should just keep plugging on as I am.)

Besides (as I just reminded myself) the way this is designed I can build the frames

## Dancing Chicken A Mini Saga in (?) Parts Part XXXIV

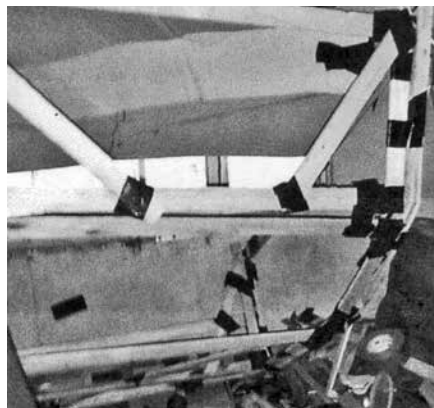
Copyright © Gloria Sadler Burge

one way and try them out, and then try them out another way later if I want to just by unscrewing a few hose clamps. For quick reference, here's a picture from Part XXXI during which I discovered that I could use hose clamps to attach the lateral frames to the longitudinal frames.



Meanwhile, as enamored as I am of the aesthetic qualities of the geodesic scheme, it might have to wait. However, since some genius was inspired to invent the hose clamp, the wait for a more aesthetic alternative need not be permanent.

I declare I almost forgot that the triangles were originally considered for structural reasons. Here's a picture of one of the earlier "three dimensional rough sketches" of that experiment in progress.



Hmmm. Pursuant to which, it looks to me as though all of these options point to it making the most sense to go ahead and just construct the rectangles with the layering next, then that way I can modify them later. At this point they're put together with Gorilla tape, which I did first to be sure they'd fit the longitudinal frames. So now I guess giving each lateral frame its full complement of fasteners would be the next step. Or, hmmm, maybe I'd better start with just one, layered and fastened, and then I can plan to test it for rigidity and then add one of the other options as it looks most prudent, etc.

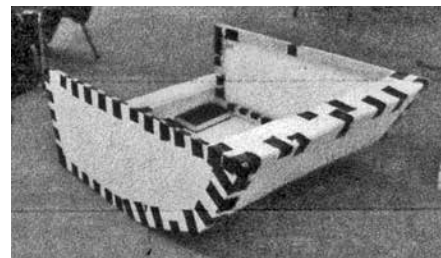
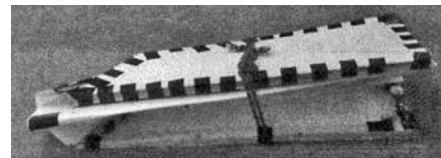
One of the big advantages of using laths is because they're easier to work with. If I use plywood for any of this, I'll have to figure out ways to (to just name a couple or so) transport, store and cut it to fit.

When I built *Talitha Cumi*, I had a couple of solutions to those problems. While most of the construction on that craft was done in the Terry Camper, I also had a dome, or perhaps I should call it a dome tent, which I also built. It provided a large covered work area in which I could work when cutting the largest pieces, such as the bottom.

I totally forgot until after I'd launched that boat that some of the smaller pieces, or at least the bevels and curves on some of the smaller pieces, were cut by a neighbor who is a skilled carpenter. With much chagrin I confessed to him later that I'd forgotten to mention that fact in the story and, being the wonderfully good natured person he is, he said not to worry about it.

It occurred to me recently that he might be able to help with the plywood pieces, if I decide to include them, that *Dancing Chicken* will need. Of course, while he is a wonderfully good neighbor, he is also an even busier carpenter now than he was then. Being good at one's work has a way of doing that, you get more and more busy. Of course, he might still try to work me in, being the good neighbor he is.

I also, however, have carpenters and boat builders in the congregation of the church I now attend. The church to which I refer is the one in the auditorium of which the photo of the forward section of *Dancing Chicken* appeared in Part XXI. Hmmm, I guess I should include that one here, so here it is (folded on the left, unfolded on the right).



So enlisting the help of one of the above-mentioned might end up being a viable option if it looks like the plywood pieces for the lateral frames is what might work best for *Dancing Chicken*. The pieces I need would be small, so if one of them consented to do that, I could pay for the purchase of the plywood, ask him to cut them and then he could bring them to church (I usually get a ride home from church, thereby solving the problem of the plywood pieces getting to my place).

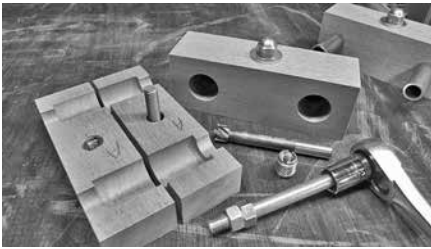
Off and on during all this, I think of that saying that I have frequently mentioned as being one of my favorites, i.e., "There's always a way." I just thought of that one again just now. I'm also remembering that very frequently, in the midst of various similar situations in the past, there has been a point in time at which I may not know exactly what that way is.

Well, "we shall see."



## The Towel Rack

The steering tubing in *Helge's* aft cabin is exposed. To offer protection where it passes through the head I reinforced it with stainless. The brushed finish tubes make a nice towel rack (no standing gentlemen, only sitting please).



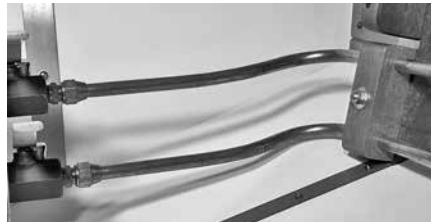
## The Building of *Helge*



*Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the things you did do. Mark Twain*

## The Building of *Helge* A George Buehler Diesel Duck Part 7

Wendell Gallagher is building a Buehler Diesel Duck 38. He had the steel hull built at a yard and trucked to his home and is doing the rest himself.



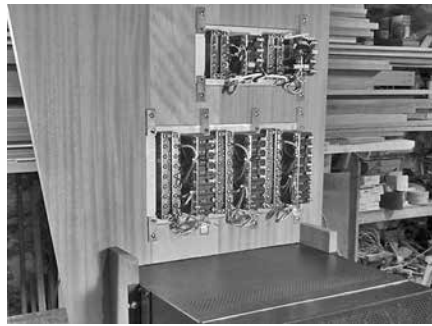
## The Electrical Panel

The forward cabin's island will house the AC and DC distribution panels and the EXELTECH inverter. These 1,000watt modules power the inverter. Any one of the three modules can fail without interrupting the output. The modules are managed by a pair of control cards. Only one card is used at a time. The standby card will automatically take over if the running card fails. It's these features that make EXELTECH inverters truly redundant.





Grain enhanced with mineral spirits.

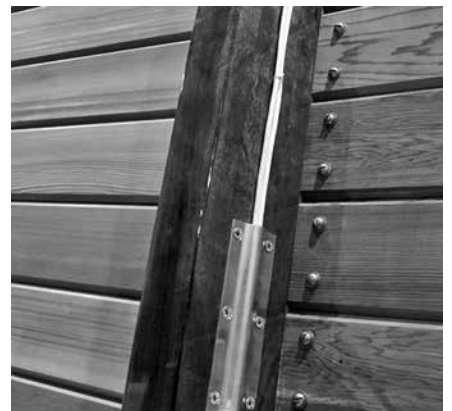


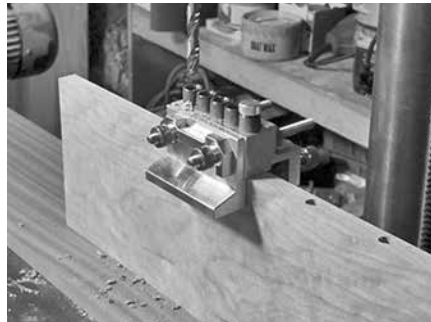
## Light Emitting Diodes

*Helge's* forward cabin is illuminated with light emitting diodes. The fixtures are IMTRA's 3" war white downlights. They have a wonderful warm color and produce 180lumens each (roughly the same as a 20watt halogen). All eight fixtures combined draw less than 4amps at 12volts, making them extremely efficient.

The lights are switched through a new old stock antique rotary switch (1910). It's spring loaded and activates with a nice snap.

The majority of *Helge's* wiring is exposed. The few wires that are not are run through conduit (as with the downlights).





## The Liquor Cabinet

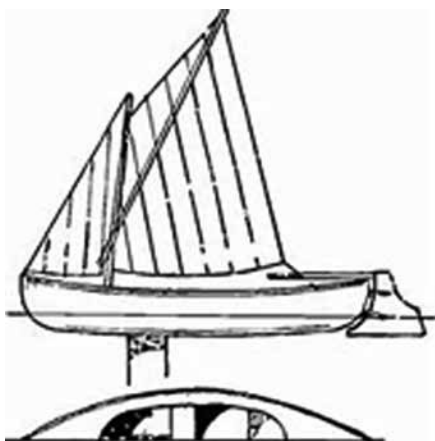
*Helge's* liquor cabinet hinges down from the forward cabin's island. It's made from ribbon stripe, cherry and walnut.

When the island is installed the cabinet will serve as an adjustment piece. Its width will be trimmed to correct the island's final length.

Sawdust was left behind on that wood run.







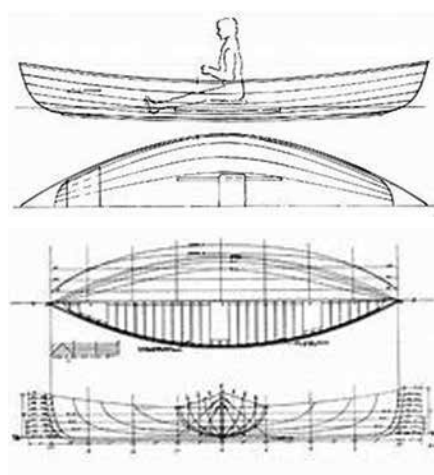
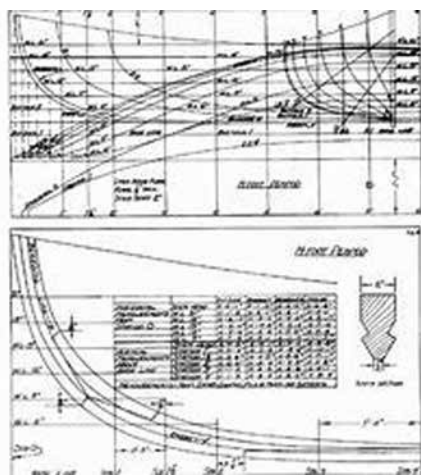
## Peapod Build Resumes: Part 2

By Richard Honan

January first marked two months of construction of our Doug Hylan-designed 13' Peapod. My apprentice, Christian Buonopane, and I have been adding a few strips of Atlantic white cedar each week. The bead and cove cedar strips are glued to each other with Titebond III and temporarily fastened to the station molds to create the hull shape.

Next begins the fairing of the hull, initially with a 7" disc sander, then some hand sanding for high spots with a couple of flexible 18" and 24" longboards. Final sanding will be done with a 6" diameter random orbital sander. After the fairing and sanding, the entire hull will receive a layer of 6oz fiberglass cloth and Total Boat 2:1 Epoxy.

Christian and I are very fortunate to have such a nice boat building project to work on as we approach coldest months of winter. The 13' Peapod was featured on the month of May in the 2020 *WoodenBoat* Calendar, sitting on the stern of the sardine carrier *Grayling*.



No two midlife crises are alike, but when a sailor has one you can count on misadventures to rival those of Odysseus. My own midlife crisis came on time, at the age of 50, and left me with memories for a lifetime and then some. Having gone through one career, the start of another, a divorce, a happily ever after remarriage and a brush with death, I felt I was due for a selfish moment, so I set about mine in my own misguided way.

During a summer in Seattle in which I worked on East Coast time, I discovered the Center for Wooden Boats (CWB.org) on Lake Union with its fleet of Beetle Cats and other vintage wooden dinghies. I found the feel of a wooden sailboat on water was as natural and organic as the wind passing through maples on a summer day. The waters there seemed to part as if in respect for something it recognized as once having grown along its shores. I wanted to own that experience and so set about to find my own wooden sailboat.

After a time I found the “perfect” boat, a 30’ wooden sloop exactly my age. I knew on first internet sighting that it was meant to be my red convertible two seater sports car. Having sea fever, I bought it sight unseen and shipped it from New England to Lake Lanier, north of Atlanta, Georgia, my home waters. Although its forest green topsides were cracked and peeling with age, she had beautiful lines, having been drawn by the hand of one of the great boat designers and built with the heritage of classic Northeastern yachts. Designed by William Roue of *Bluenose* fame and built at the yard of Smith and Rhuland in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, during its heyday, she had a low freeboard with a narrow beam and sweeping overhangs from bow to stern. She spared little room for cabin comforts but had a sleek shape to slice through the welcoming waters that awaited her, or so I thought.

When my dreamboat arrived on its flatbed trailer I had her Sitka spruce mast raised and rigged with its bewildering array of stays, shrouds and spreaders, fit for and as confusing as the mesh of wires on telephone poles from my youth. As I stood on the bow, my classic yacht was lowered into the water where she unhesitatingly and shamelessly proceeded to sink. Waking from my reverie to a genuine crisis and almost saying aloud, “What have I done?” I noticed, looking down, that I could see through where the deck should be into the forepeak and noticed water pooling ominously.



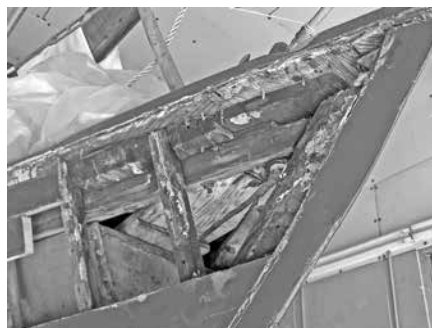
*Spirit*, nee *Amity*, in my first attempted launch.

Stooping to peer in, I found that the forestay had peeled the deck from the hull, leaving a toothless and cynical grin in place of the finely lined prow I had seen in her “before” pictures. Panic set in, along with no small amount of embarrassment, before I

## One Sailor’s Midlife Crisis

By Randy Cadenhead

dejectedly had the boat cradled back onto the hard, knowing then I needed help.

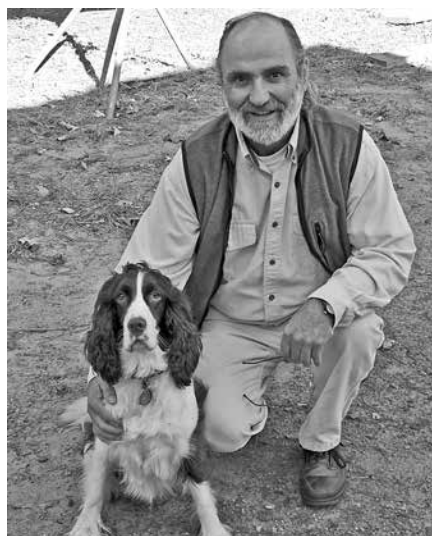


The bow where the primary issue lay.

Instead of doing the sensible thing and calling a therapist, I began the seemingly impossible task of finding someone in landlocked rural Georgia who knew the fine art of repairing wooden sailboats. I searched, with some trepidation and a fair measure of shame, for the impossible before I picked up the phone and called the one person I was told who could save me, or at least my boat. I had been warned that this character was as difficult and intimidating as the Great Wizard of Oz himself, but all agreed he was my only choice.

“Ello mate,” he replied when I introduced myself on the phone. “Yes, I’ve heard about you. You’re the bloke who bought that shipwreck and had it hauled down here.” After I asked what he might charge, he replied, “Well now, not so fast, we need to sit down and discuss this before I decide whether I can help you.” It seems that I was the one to be interviewed for this job.

Several days later I drove down a gravel road and up to a large tin shed surrounded by old boats in various states of disrepair. “This is not a good sign,” I thought. Opening the door to the “office,” I was greeted by a cloud of Marlboro smoke, followed by a Springer Spaniel.



Len Kirkham, one with Sami, his Springer Spaniel.

I shook hands with the dog and the craggy old salt I found within the cloud and then sat down across a dusty desk covered with broken bits of boats. “So, I have to ask,” he began, punctuating his point by putting out a cigarette butt and lighting another, “what in the hell were you thinking?” I then proceeded to suffer through the toughest interrogation of my life which, as an attorney, is saying a lot.

Looking me over with his long, peppered mane and longer graying beard, he took a deep draft from his next cigarette. I began to wonder what I had been thinking in seeking him out or if I had stopped thinking at all when I had bought my rabbit hole of a boat. We negotiated for a time, not over money but over the quality of what was to become my resurrected boat. In the several hours of questioning I happened to ask how he got into wooden boat building. It was then that the stories began to unfold.

Over the course of several years Len Kirkham and his crew of one and occasionally two restored what turned from rotting timber into a new boat that I named for the *Spirit* from the creation story that moved upon the face of the waters on the second day. I sat for many hours across that desk and learned a great deal about my friend.

He was born in working class England, apprenticed at Camper and Nicholson’s, taught himself to sail, navigated for royalty and, in the first Whitbread, studied at the London School of Economics, became an investment banker and left it all to sail around the world on his own wooden boat with only an old world atlas in place of charts. On the way home, in the South Atlantic, he decided to go around once again. Ultimately he took his boat two or three times around the world (the stories ran together), stopping from time to time to do contract work for interests with money and confidence in his judgment. He was once held hostage by rebels, spent time in the company of a whale that found his boat amorously attractive and walked from India into the Himalayas where he spent months of silence in a monastery.

In time he married an actual rocket scientist. After a few adventures together they ended up in Buford, Georgia, where he set up shop as a shipwright and where we met, as only fate could conjure. There he built and rebuilt boats for owners who shared, or at least were willing to pay for, his vision for doing a job right, whatever the time required and with minimal regard for cost, which frankly was not nearly enough. We customers did it mostly, I think, for the entertainment that only a sailor can provide through stories lived over a lifetime at sea.

He and I shared many hours in that office as I listened to tales about his life and travels, after which he might tell me how the boat repairs were going. I will confess I enjoyed those times so much that I let the work linger on for what became years because I didn’t want to lose the excuse for listening to adventures I’d wished I had enjoyed myself.

Ultimately *Spirit* required a few replaced ribs, a great many new hull planks from garboards to the waterline and a few thousand bronze screws to hold it all together. In the process I learned how to select oak for knees, steam and conform wood into the curves of the hull, caulk with oakum and admire the work of one who was one of the last old school yacht builders.

In good time I let *Spirit* go and she found a home back north, where I understand she

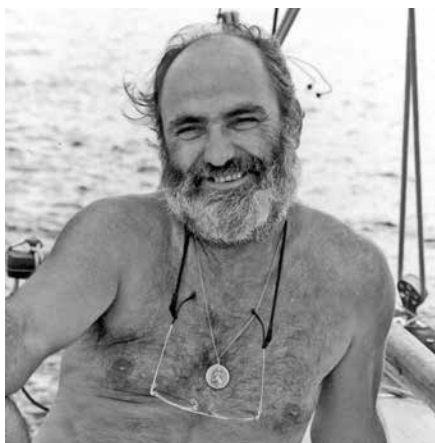
sails proudly still. I proceeded to buy another boat that, not surprisingly, was in need of repair but this time made of fiberglass.



*Spirit* happily back on the water and home again up north.

Over the years I cycled through several more boats but made regular stops at that smoky shed to check on my friend. I learned how he taught a few famous and infamous seamen and of the racing picture of him that hangs perhaps even today in the Hong Kong Yacht Club. Sometimes I heard the same stories repeated, but I never let on. I had something to keep me from any further midlife crises. I gave a believing ear and received in return the riches of a life I wish I could have lived.

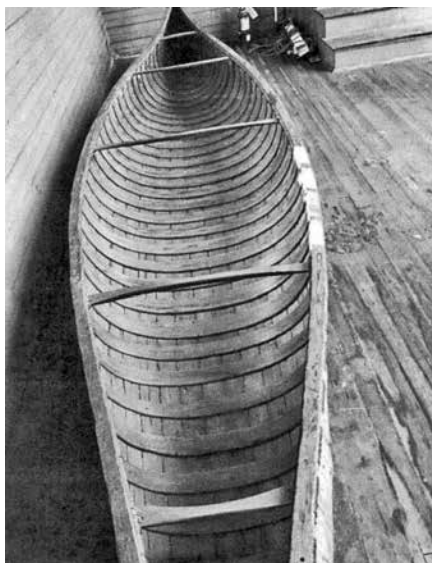
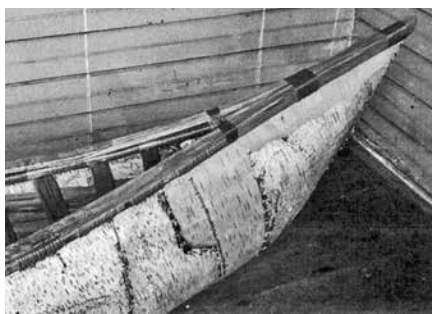
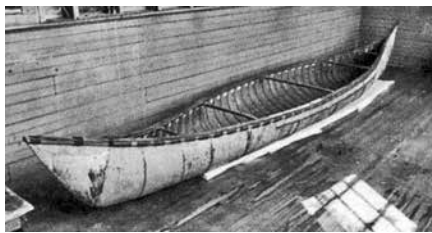
Both Len and the dog grew old like me, but each retained their bright eyes and enjoyment whenever I dropped by for a visit. It's been two years now since he passed on and I miss my friend, though I can't quite say the same about that midlife crisis boat that was mine for a time.



## A Penobscot Canoe

By Frank Stauss  
Reprinted from *The Mainsheet*  
Newsletter of the Delaware River TSCA

Mary and I visited the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. While touring the museum we decided to visit the home and studio of N.C. Wyeth. If you are a fan of the illustrator/artist yourself you will want to explore his workshop. While in the studio I saw a large canoe against one wall. The guide told me that the canoe was a Penobscot Indian canoe built in 1810 by Indians in the state of Maine. It is made of birch bark and measures 18'9" long. It was just returned to the studio from a trip to a conservator. The canoe is depicted in several paintings by Wyeth.



## N.C. Wyeth Studio & Art





I have been pretty dissatisfied with what I have been able to accomplish over the past several weeks. I suppose I was a bit distracted as I had to go get aboard *Alice the Tractor* and do some plowing. I've been pretty unsatisfied over our winter overhaul progress. Seems like there was just never anything very "photogenic" to pass along. What with all the stuff we've been adding maybe there is something to report.



Like that new canopy top over the incipient mud room back by the new main entrance adjacent to the leveled walkway and extended aft sponsons.



The edges curve to match the now mid cabin coachroof. It should stand a fair amount of impact and weight (snow loading, potentially) and it pretty much seems to do the job expected. It's even pretty well glassed and ready for whatever is next. I think it could be canvas glued down to resemble a high dollar canvas top. I'll use a painter's drop cloth, Titebond II and paint. Then maybe we can make a pilgrimage up to Priest Lake for a professional estimate from Kelly the Canvas Lady for the side curtains. I do note that the edges (with gutters still planned) will keep at least direct falling rain from landing inside the aft cockpit.



I should remember just how hard it is to work on the top step of a step ladder with a bucket of 'pox in one hand, a brush in the other, lean waaaaay over and get all the goo

## The View from Almost Canada by Dan Rogers

in the right places with a whole 7" of clearance from the ceiling.



That was just today and yesterday, but about the past maybe two weeks, that whole heater reinstallation and the propane locker business with its sealed lid and overboard drain and solenoid shut off and all that.



There's that air whistle system with the storage tank and compressor and supply hose that's waiting for the solenoid to show up and connect to the switch run from the new button on the helm station.



There is that potable water tank and all the vent and fill pipe and supply hookups that are just about done, and the real live potable water pressure pump that is mounted next to the high amperage switch for the air whistle compressor. The same compressor that got completely rebuilt from the box. I just didn't

think it was up to the task so completely re-configured with new manifold and gage and connections. That's why I had to add the extra tank and rebuild that one, too. I at least now have a new set of taps for NPT sizes in the 1/4" to 1/2" denominations.



I think we'll get more than 20 toots to the charge before the compressor kicks in automatically and refills the system.



There is a brand new factory stock fuel tank that fits under the built to order step and tool box locker right next to the 20 circuit J box, charger mount and shore power nexus that is back where all those new circuits had to be run and pinned back.



That is mounted back by where the new bilge pump and new bilge blower are mounted and wired, back by the new conduit run that sort of prettied up the jumble of wires running under the entrance cutout and over by the new anchor mount. That is right next to the new kicker motor bracket and aft anchor roller. Then there's the rework done on the double doors, they seal to the cold and wind now. They can be secured against most normal sorts of unauthorized entry and they have those bullet spring latch thingies inset to hold them closed when we are underway without having to make a hook and padeye connect. And there's that gooseneck lamp that sports a screw in 12volt bulb that should work out for reading and working on the computer.



This is back by more 12volt outlets and USB ports. That was some of the same wiring that supports the 4" ducted warm air recirc system that runs from the repositioned heater down to the cabin sole up by the helmsman's feet. Pretty slick, but the whoosh of the air is a bit annoying. So there's also a conventional dashboard fan set up on 12volts as well back by the solenoid switch and warning light for the LPG shutoff. And that is back by that long suffering sink cabinet that has a gray water tank right underneath. It is kinda different back by the motor and not up in that really crowded galley.



It did all just fit in there and still permit leaning over and touching the water from inside the boat to put a line on a dock cleat from inside back there. Or even lean over and top up the inflatable, floating alongside, with that reworked compressor.



I suppose I could show that stern anchor stowage. The extra Bruce will have to hide out up forward in the chain locker under the Captain's berth up forward where that generally ill fitting hatch has been leaking.



That one that closes OK now and sits next to a down gutter and above a completely reworked windshield base, the one that used to drip on the Captain's head. No, not that head, the one with ears. That hatch fits pretty well from inside, too.



Sealing strips and finger pulls and slide latches. Something's been getting done even though I've been out on *Alice* an inordinate amount of time lately. I'm kinda tired.



## My Name is WOLO This is My Story



WOLO showed up Christmas Eve highly recommended by some obscure vendor in Hong Kong. WOLO was supposed to make *Walkabout's* steam whistle just about the grandest whistle in the land. All this was gonna take was a 25amp main circuit from the battery, a switch circuit from the breaker panel to the helm to the stern sheets to a special solenoid switch converted to 1/2" pipe thread from some sorta metric flair compression tapered female cross threaded close nipple connection with "easy connect" features. Hey, WOLO should have, at least, the benefit of the doubt. And he did.

Right up to where he blew that first 25amp fuse and the air discharge hose fitting exploded into small fragments of thin wall tubing and torn O rings. "No problem. Stores are closed tomorrow and wouldn't it be cool to have the whistle working. There must be some sort of pneumatic parts in the drawer here."

And so it began. Every fitting was either compression or 1/4" NPT. Only WOLO knew for certain what his tank was originally tapped for but EVERY joint and EVERY tapped thread LEAKED. It'll be OK, shouldn't be too hard to disassemble this puppy and set it right. Right?"

A week later, WOLO had a new pressure gage, a new pressure off/on switch, a new pop off valve block, several different shock/vibration damping mounts in several different locations and orientations.





A week later WOLO could barely squeak the whistle before he had to run breathlessly for 15 minutes to recharge. And WOLO was in no shape to go back to Hong Kong and ask for my money back. So it was time to consult the guy who makes the whistles. Ron lives back in Maryland and he was good enough to spend a portion of one of his Saturdays talking to me out here in Almost-Canada about how I had sought to “improve” on the \$10 cheap plastic mattress inflator that ran our whistle all last summer. In fact, it ran the prototype Earl gave us, too.



What Ron said we needed was a storage tank. Well, we got one, been on the Wunderwhut shelf for years. Never worked as the emergency trailer tire inflator it was supposed to become. That’s how come it’s been there all this time. Sure, it leaked and that hose was really namby pamby and the air flow valve wasn’t much of a thing. Another trip to the hardware store and we had a “T” and a new pressure valve and several pneumatic disconnects. And some surgery made a place for this storage tank but WOLO still had a bad case of emphysema.



What WOLO needed now was a pressure regulator between the storage tank and the solenoid valve. Someplace in there.



One more teensie weensie thing. The little tube between the two compression fittings still leaks. It appears that the only way to get that apart is to pull the compressor head apart and loosen the cylinder just an itty bit and slip everything back just so. And then that O ring that sits on the top of the cylinder sleeve can’t fall loose and get cut up, and well. That was when...



“Hmnnn, that drain fitting on the bottom might start leaking, better take it out and retap, and hmnnn, do you suppose that original bore was that crooked, hmnnn, no don’t s’pose so.

I guess that’s why there’s that tube of JB Weld, and a 1/4” NPT plug and an O ring sitting next to the 14mm wrench.

My name is WOLO. This, is my story.





## Princess Ann Inside Glassing

Last time I left you with these.



She was easily rolled over and it was time to get on with the inside. I really enjoyed doing the outside, it was like a big barrel, easy to get to and I got to use some cool tools like a big belt sander and an air powered long board.



It's a way different story for the inside, can't use anything except for grinders because everything is an inside curve. Even the sides complicate things because except for the first 6' or so they curve inward. I can't really say that this was all that much fun.



## From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas



But I got it done and I have a plan. I half ass sanded it, then half ass filled it and sanded it some more so it was kind of smoothish and ready for the triaxial cloth. This stuff is good because it's not only strong but will conform to odd shapes (half ass sanding jobs).

A word about glassing an inward sloping surface with wet cloth that's heavy and doesn't want to stick, it sucks. I ended up cutting the cloth and putting tape along the top edge so I could stick it to the hull, then wetting it out and patiently waiting for the epoxy to soak in and then rolling the hell out of it to get it to adhere to the hull. It worked fine, just took patience and a whole lot of epoxy. I probably have ten gallons in the inside alone, big boats are not cheap to build. Good thing I found RAKA or I may not be able to afford all this stuff.

Here it is all glassed with the heavy stuff. That little black thing sitting there is a self leveling laser. See the line, that's the level of the floor. I did a pretty good job of making it smooth above the line and not so much below it. My plan is to put the floor beams in and then completely fill everything below that level with expanding foam then put the floor on and glass it in. I'm tired of worrying about getting water under the floor so I'll just fill it up. I can see eyes rolling about this, I know foam can get waterlogged and all that, but by using the closed cell foam and doing a good job of glassing the floor in I should be OK.



For the area above the floor I'm doing a better job of smoothing. After I sand this filler smooth I'll add a layer of 10oz cloth and fair and sand that so Helen doesn't rub her hand over it and call me a lazy slug. A full transom goes across just in front of the cutout. That's it for now, you Yankees try to stay warm.



## WEST WIGHT POTTER OWNERS WEB SITE

Technical & Modification Data

List of Potter Owners Worldwide!

Great Sailing Stories & Helpful Tips

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## RAM ISLAND PEAPOD



13'6"x52" Handlaid Fiberglass Hull  
Traditional Performing Downeast Peapod  
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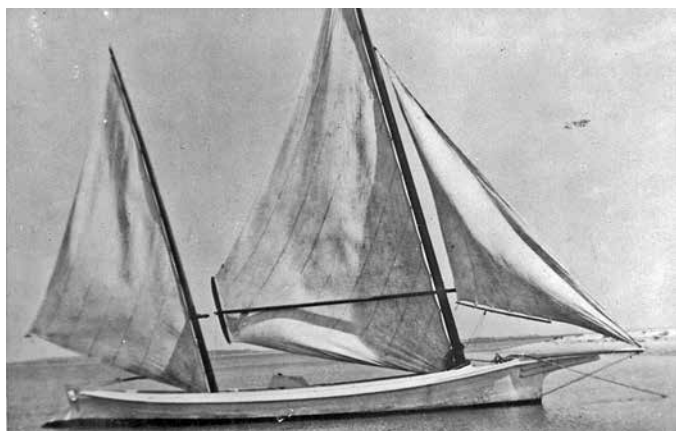
CBMM's working Shipyard has previously built two log canoes, *Bufflehead* (2014–2015) and *Caroline* (2018–2019) and completed a historic restoration of 1889 bug-eye *Edna Lockwood*, another log hull Chesapeake Bay built boat, in 2018.

"There's no other Shipyard in the world more experienced in working on Bay built log canoes," Connor said. "We're always excited by an opportunity to help preserve a vital piece of Chesapeake Bay history and to teach both the public and our apprentices more about traditional wooden boat building."

For most of its history, *Glide* was used for pleasure, but not for racing. John T. Adams Sr acquired the boat in 1962 from Raymond Ziegler of Cambridge, who bought the boat in the early 20th century from Earle Orem, a mayor of Cambridge. In 1943 marine architect Howard I. Chapelle restored *Glide* and took its lines. Unusual among surviving Chesapeake Bay log canoes, *Glide's* logs are joined with wooden mortise and tenon rather than the iron drifts typical of later log canoes.

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's working Shipyard preserves traditional Chesapeake Bay wooden boat building skills and techniques through living traditions, experiential archaeology and education from youth to adults. A tangible connection to the Chesapeake's rich history boat building, shipwrights are dedicated to passing on skills and knowledge necessary to carry the wooden boat tradition forward. To learn more about CBMM's Shipyard, its staff, and its current restoration and construction projects, visit [cbmmshipyard.org](http://cbmmshipyard.org).

*Glide*, pictured under sail, c 1930s–1940s.  
– Photo courtesy of John T. Adams Jr



## CBMM Shipwrights to Restore Oldest Existing Log Canoe



This winter, shipwrights at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St Michaels, Maryland, will take on the restoration of a subject they're all too familiar with, a Chesapeake Bay sailing log canoe. Part of CBMM's small craft collection, *Glide* is a three log canoe believed to have been built c 1864 at Town Point in Dorchester County, Maryland, by Washington Hammond Skinner (1823–1901). Originally called *Monkey*, it is believed to be the oldest existing Chesapeake Bay log canoe and was donated to CBMM in 2018 by John T. Adams Jr.

"This project is an opportunity for visitors to observe as our shipwrights conserve one of our most historic vessels," said Associate Curator of Collections Jenifer Dolde. "Curatorial staff will document each step of the process as we uncover the mysteries of *Glide's* log hull construction, replacing decayed wood in order to preserve the canoe for years to come."

CBMM's Shipyard staff, led by Joe Connor, will work to restore *Glide* to sailing condition without doing a complete overhaul of the historic canoe's log hull. The primary focus of their work will be resplicing two primary log joints to increase their strength and watertight capabilities while maintaining the mechanical biscuit fasteners original to the vessel. Their goal is to sail *Glide* by the end of summer 2020 before returning the canoe to sit on display in CBMM's Small Boat Shed. All work will be done in adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation.

Three log canoe *Glide* sits inside the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's Small Boat Shed in St Michaels, Maryland.



The public is invited to get hands on with the restoration of 1912 river tug *Delaware* this winter and spring through our Apprentice for a Day Program. Participants will have the opportunity to work side by side with CBMM shipwrights and learn the fundamentals of boat building by taking part in this full stem to stern restoration.

Workdays are scheduled for select dates with offerings held from 10am–4pm each day. In these sessions, participants will learn the fundamentals of ship construction by removing, milling and replacing floors and frames that will then become part of the vessel's backbone. *Delaware* is constructed with both sawn and steam bent frames, giving participants the opportunity to learn both techniques. Materials are included with registration.

Built in Bethel, Delaware, by William H. Smith, *Delaware* once hauled scows on Broad

## Help Restore 1912 River Tug *Delaware*

Creek, often laden with lumber, and towed ram schooners to and from Laurel, Delaware. Occasionally, she carried parties of young people to Sandy Hill for day trips on the Nanticoke River. Donated to CBMM by Bailey Marine Construction in 1991, *Delaware* is now a member of the floating fleet on display along CBMM's waterfront campus. To follow along with this restoration, and for updates on other Shipyard projects, visit [cbmmshipyard.org](http://cbmmshipyard.org) where regular progress reports, photos, and videos will be posted.

Guests can sign up for a single day for \$55 or a full weekend for \$95 with a 20% discount offered to CBMM members. To register, and for a full list of program dates, visit [cbmm.org/shipyardprograms](http://cbmm.org/shipyardprograms).







CBMM offers a number of hands on programs in the Shipyard throughout the year through its Apprentice for a Day Program. Apprentice for a Day Shipyard Programs (with workshops) got underway in January and run through May. Programs take place on weekends and selected weekdays and include a variety of programs for every interest and age, including Electronic Navigation for Non-Technical People, Boating Essentials, Chart Navigation, Casting & Pouring Iron, Small Diesel Engine Maintenance & Repair, the Art of Spiling Planks and more. Apprentice for a Day Shipyard Programs take place year round and offer demonstrations, workshops, intensives with visiting master craftsmen, on the water experiences and customized programming.

March 1: Delaware Restoration Sawn & Bent Frames

March 6: Sip & Scratch

March 7: Pour on the Shore

March 14: Open Boatshop

March 21-22: Chart Navigation

March 28: Delaware Restoration Sawn & Bent Frames

March 29: Delaware Restoration: Sawn & Bent Frames

## Shipyard Programs Announced

April 11: Open Boatshop

April 18: Small Diesel Engine Maintenance & Repair

April 25-26: The Art of Spiling Planks

May 9: The Art of Making Riggig Blocks (at HSMC)

May 9-10: The Art of Spiling Planks



What to expect: Participants are expected to wear closed toe shoes for all programs held in the Boatshop. The Boatshop does not have an HVAC system so please dress appropriately for the weather outdoors. All personal protective equipment, materials and tools are provided unless otherwise noted. We encourage participants to bring a bag lunch for all workshops and intensives.



Registering for AFAD courses: Email CBMM Program Administrative Assistant Laurel Seeman at [lseeman@cbmm.org](mailto:lseeman@cbmm.org) or call (410) 745-4947 to register. Shipyard courses are subject to change year to year with registration required.

For more information contact Shipyard Programs Manager Jenn Kuhn at [afad@cbmm.org](mailto:afad@cbmm.org), call (410) 745-4980 or search online for "CBMM Apprentice for a Day Programs" for further information.

Open Boatshop programs also return this year with the public invited on Saturdays in March and April to spend the day in the Shipyard creating woodworking projects of their own design under the guidance of one of CBMM's experienced shipwrights.

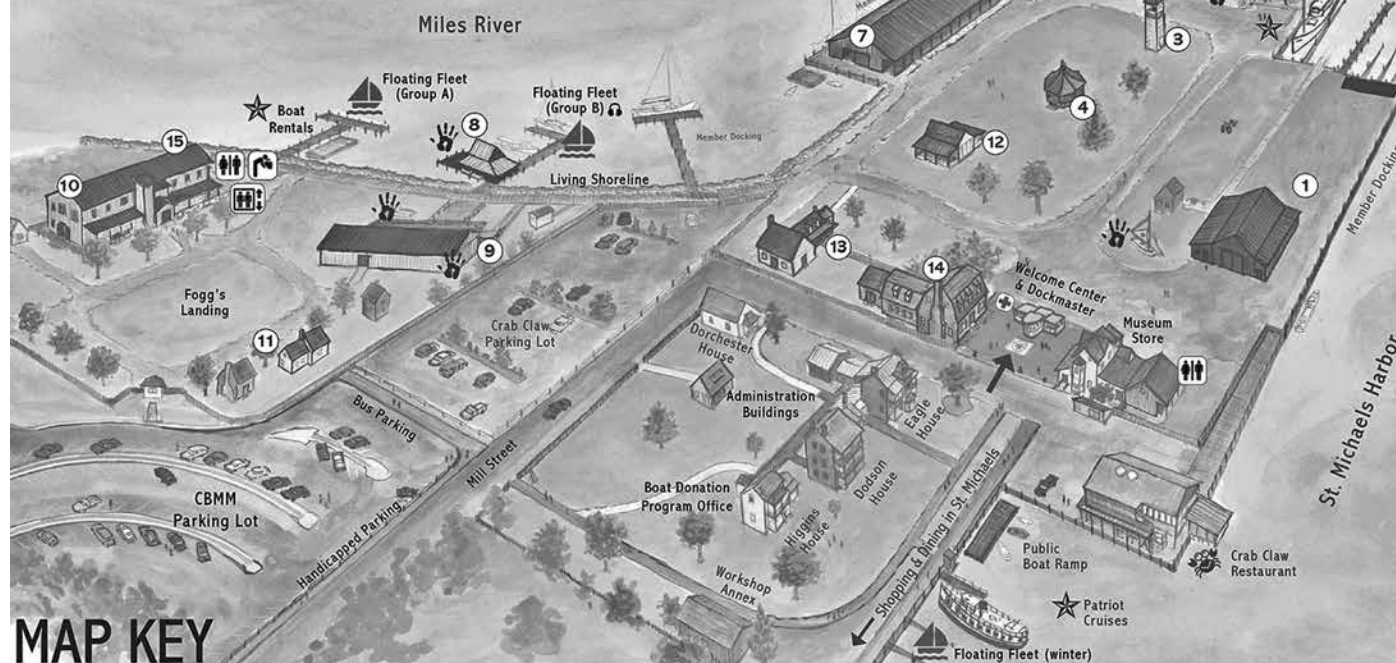
Participation in each program is limited with advanced registration needed and dates and details available at [cbmm.org/shipyardprograms](http://cbmm.org/shipyardprograms). For more information, email [afad@cbmm.org](mailto:afad@cbmm.org) or call (410) 745-4980.

## Welcome to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

Explore our 18 acre waterfront campus and discover how people live, work, and play on the Bay.

Your paid admission is good for two days! Keep your receipt and come and go until closing time.

CBMM has ample seating, with benches and picnic tables located throughout campus.





Robert Jerden ("Bob") Whittier, 97, formerly of Kingston and Duxbury, passed away peacefully surrounded by family at his son's home in St Louis, Missouri, on December 24, 2019. Born in Norwood, he was the son of Hulda Jerden Whittier and Alfred Lester Whittier. Bob was predeceased in 2006 by his wife, Helen Nason Whittier.

Raised in Norwood, Brockton, Whitman and Boston, Bob lost his hearing to illness at the age of seven and subsequently attended the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Thayer Academy. A 1941 graduate of Thayer, he later attended Parks Air College in East St Louis, Illinois.

A resident of Avon from the late 1940s to the mid 1950s, Bob began his career as an aviation mechanic but his keen mechanical sense and skill with language led him to begin contributing articles to popular magazines of the day such as *Air Facts*, *Skyways*, *Flying*, *Air Progress*, *Rudder*, *Salt Water Sportsman* and *Sport Aviation*. As EAA #1235, he was an early member of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), now a worldwide organization of more than 200,000 recreational aviation enthusiasts.

In 1956, he and his family moved to Osterville, where Bob developed his writing career and pursued his aviation passions, restoring and flying a 1935 E-2 Taylor Cub. A move to Duxbury followed in 1963 where Bob designed and produced the noted Seamaster motorboat. He resided in Duxbury until his relocation to Kingston in 2004.

The author of more than 2,500 articles and ten books on a wide range of topics, Bob's writing career spanned seven decades. In 1980 he received the Raytheon Company's

## In Memoriam

Herewith another goodbye to a longtime supporter and contributor to *MAIB* since our earliest days (1987). Bob Whittier made himself known to us at the Hull Snow Row events back in those days and we subsequently did a feature story on him, which follows this obituary. Suffice it for me to say here that his early support and contributions were a vital part of our becoming established in the role we have lived since. At 97 he lived a full life despite his total deafness since age 7 pursuing his dreams.

**Robert Jerden Whittier**  
(1922–2019) Award Winning  
Aviation And Boating Writer



prestigious Captain Fred E. Lawton Boating Safety Award for his contributions to boating safety through the media. In 2003 *Flying* magazine honored him with the "Bax Seat Trophy," an award presented annually to an aviation writer who has notably contributed to aviation literature. In 2004 he was inducted into the EAA's Homebuilders' Hall

of Fame in recognition of his contributions to the world of aviation.

A lifetime member of the Camp Squanto Alumni Association, Bob was a devoted camper, staff member and volunteer from 1934 until his death. In 2012 he created a fund to honor excellence in teaching and a scholarship in his name is presented annually to an emerging leader at Camp Squanto. Also in 2012 the Old Colony Council of the Boy Scouts of America inducted him into the Order of the Arrow and awarded him the Vigil Honor for his "...exceptional service, personal commitment and unselfish interest in the welfare of others..."

Known to his many friends, colleagues and neighbors as fun loving, brilliant and insatiably curious, Bob always had a smile and a joke to offer, an insight to share and a treat in his pocket or a friendly greeting for any dog or cat lucky enough to cross his path. He will be missed by many.

Bob is survived by his three children and their partners: Jenney Whittier and Charles Clark of Portland, Oregon; John Whittier and Brenda Otterson of St Louis, Missouri; and James and AnaMaria Whittier of Sunapee, New Hampshire. Bob was the loving grandfather of Adam, Christopher, Emily, Lauren and Michael Whittier. He also leaves numerous nieces and nephews in Massachusetts and California.

A memorial service will be held in Kingston, Massachusetts, in May. See the Shepherd Funeral Home website <https://shepherdfuneralhome.com> for details. Donations in Bob's memory may be made to the "Camp Squanto Alumni Association," c/o CSAA, 23 Mariner's Drive, Marshfield, MA 02050.

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# Seamaster Boats

## A 25 Year Dream in Search of Fruition

Bob Whittier is living proof of that cliché about the "stubborn Swede". He's been striving now for 25 years to get his dream boat out into the hands of people who would appreciate it. He did succeed during those years in building and selling about 25 of the boats, marketed by him as Seamaster Boats. That's what he calls the boat, SEAMASTER. Because it indeed masters the sea's less desirable effects on typical outboard runabouts.

The major obstacle to success has been Bob's own ideas of what makes a proper boat. He's spent 30 years writing on boating topics, books, boating articles in the boating press, boating editor for outdoor magazines, that sort of thing. He's got plaques and awards hung in his home from the boating industry recognizing his contributions to boating safety and to the boating industry. Bob's a pragmatic, no-nonsense boat addict and all of his writing presses on about sensible and rewarding small boat recreation. His creation, the SEAMASTER, came to represent all of these ideas. What it doesn't represent is catering to "styling" and "sex-appeal" ('if boats can be said to possess such an attribute, as ad men seem to think they do). Bob's sensible SEAMASTER just doesn't look flashy enough to the marketing man and the ad man. Too sensible. No flash, no pizzazz.

In an era of short, wide fiberglass outboard runabouts that carry huge motors on their transoms and hurtle along tilted bow high with the waves pounding the hull right under the passengers, Bob Whittier offers a long, slender craft that planes nearly level, slices through the waves and chop, absorbs any pounding well forward, and moves easily on modest horsepower. He's been offering this boat since 1966. He first conceived of it in 1961. Even then it wasn't a popular notion, it has a lot of the "sensible" notions of early day motorboats that would travel fast on modest power, hull designs that had to move easily because power plants were feeble. Bob's design is a planing hull, not a displacement one. It's fiberglass, not wood. But it looks sort of old-timey.

The boats that got built were snapped up by sensible people. College crew coaches on Boston's Charles River spotted Bob's SEAMASTER one time when he had it on that river. The coaches tried to stay with their crew shells at up to 15 knots in typical outboards, tipped way up at speed and making large wakes that interfered with the shells. The SEAMASTER cruised effortlessly at the needed speed and stayed nearly level on the water making little wake. And should need be, the coach could pick up a swamped crew and shell en toto on board the long narrow SEAMASTER. A number of SEAMASTERS are still at work on this task today. Others who became SEAMASTER owners were people tired of being pounded on rougher waters in conventional planing outboards.

There was no lack of publicity. Bob wrote about his boat often and at length. An article he wrote in POPULAR MECHANICS in 1971 drew a thousand inquiries and several firm orders. But Bob worked out of his home. The prototypes and first few production models were one-at-a-time efforts, the glass work farmed out to small fiberglass shops. The response from

the POPULAR MECHANICS article encouraged Bob to build new molds with detail improvements. They were nearly done when the shop doing the work burned to the ground! This was more than he could handle, and he dropped the whole project for a couple of years.

In 1973, the fuel crisis brought renewed interest in economical pleasure boating. Bob built new molds and got some production going at another shop with a good reputation. But new management soon made that arrangement a failure, and Bob got the few boats he had firm orders for built as best he could. Local zoning closed his own home shop as a location, and part time help in other small shops did less than quality work. So Whittier folded up the whole project in 1980, stored the molds and used his demo for his own pleasure.

We had a ride in this boat earlier this summer. It was a bright sunny drive to Duxbury, MA, where Bob lives, but when we launched the SEAMASTER on Duxbury Bay, the fog bank was only a short distance offshore. We never got out of the bay in view of this, and even the large bay area was much reduced in useability by the fog. Still, I was able to run the boat through paces suggested by Bob (I'm no outboard man) and it was interesting.

The 22.5' long hull is only 70" wide max, 58" at the waterline. This makes it appear very long and lean, bringing to mind that stereotype phrase, "greyhound". Ahead of the midships cockpit the foredeck reaches way out there. Behind it, a spacious walk-around cockpit floor with low gunwales goes way back to the 40hp outboard. It's something like driving those older cars with the long hoods. Two seats side by side face forward behind a fold-down windshield. Two others face to the rear. Side coamings rise

Bob Whittier and his long running dream of a proper boat, the "Seamaster."





up from the low rear freeboard to provide superb protection for the passenger/driver area, about the height of your automobile door windowsill. But, like those great old cars, if it's a nice hot summer day, you fold the windshield down into its storage area on the foredeck in about 10 seconds, underway or not.

Giving the SEAMASTER the gas results in steady acceleration, it's not a rocketship with 40hp. But as you get up to speed, 20 to 25 knots, you still can see where you're going while seated, as the bow rises maybe 3 or 4 inches on the plane, the whole hull lifts slightly instead of the bow tilting up abruptly and getting in your face. Then it's cruise time and like on rails, you slice along. We had no seaway to demonstrate Bob's claims of stability and easy ride in, but found the Plymouth harbor-master's boat churning along towards the inlet at speed and did some water ski sort of wave crossing. Bob pointed it about 45 degrees to the wake and sat back, let go the wheel, and we sliced across with little swerving. I then amused myself with similar moves. Only when I tackled the wake at a narrow angle from behind, almost just staying in between two successive waves, did the boat wallow at all and then it was no trouble to one-hand control.

Bob says the SEAMASTER is very adaptable to conditions. When it gets rough, you ease off until the boat feels comfortable and carry on. This reduces pounding to a minimum at a speed higher than the short, fat planing hulls have to fall back to in order to avoid the discomfort of wave bashing. It's seaworthy in his view because of its ability to accommodate to a variety of wave and wind conditions and still make useful headway on moderate power. The low freeboard aft, which makes it easy to fish or swim off this boat, is well away from the waves encountered up front. Following seas lift the broad flat stern easily and the length/width ratio maintains directional stability with little likelihood of broaching, according to Bob.

I liked it. I'm not experienced in outboard runabouts and have no preconceptions about what they ought to be. I liked just sitting there and driving it along about 20

From the top: The Seamaster is long and lean, befitting that cliché term, "greyhound" in appearance. With the windshield up in place, the interior is very well sheltered from wind and wave. The sun peeked through alongshore as we did the Plymouth waterfront, the MAYFLOWER replica and Plymouth Rock.

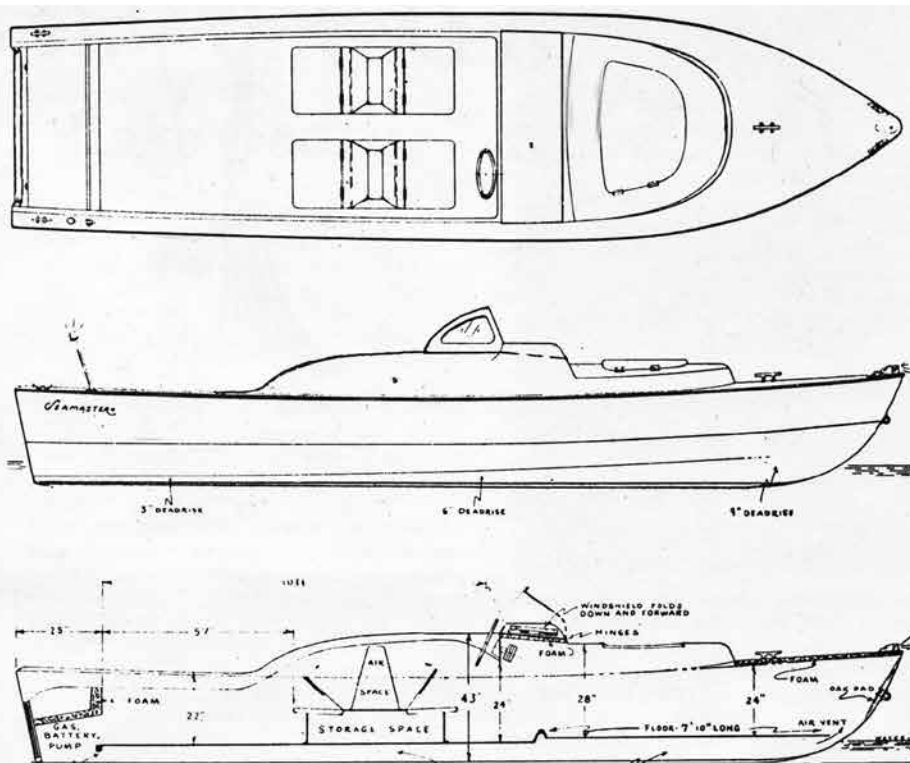


knots in flat water, well off full throttle. In the heaviest fog, we sat up on the top of the seat backs, wide enough for comfortable seating, within easy reach of the wheel and throttle still, and offering a bit broader perspective looking for whatever was out there in that fog.

So, what's Bob now going to do? He'd like to sell the whole package, rights, molds, demo boat, etc. to a builder who'd do something with it. Bob says he'd need a 6 figure price to recoup his 25 years of invested time and money. But he knows that'll not happen. So he now thinks something in a low 5 figure payment and a royalty per boat sold arrangement might work. Bob's now too old to try again to manufacture the boat, he's at retirement age and wearied of the years spent on the dream to little avail. He has no shop of his own. He's had too much bad experience with small fiberglass shops' unreliability and poor quality control. He knows the outboard market today isn't interested in "sensible" boats like the SEAMASTER, not in volume production quantities. But he still believes in the boat's merits and that there's a modest market out there for it amongst people tired of the consumer boats available and looking for a sensible, safe, seaworthy cruising runabout.

You can't talk with Bob about it, he's been stone deaf since childhood and writing is the only way to communicate with him. Family and friends can converse with Bob as he can talk pretty clearly, but it takes a while to get used to talking with him. Phone calls are handled by his wife Helen, who then has to act as "interpreter". So if you think you might be a builder interested, write to Bob first at P.O. Drawer T, Duxbury, MA 02332. He's got lots of printed material on the boat, including bygone sea trial reports from major national magazines, in-depth background information, sales brochures, etc. He steadfastly believes in the boat and wants very much to see it find its niche in today's outboard boating market, a small niche that can keep a small shop comfortably busy catering to those who prefer a "sensible" boat to a flash ego prop.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks



Exterior and interior details are shown in these drawings




Above: The narrow hull is a planing hull despite its appearance being similar to early displacement designs.

Below: At speed the "Seamaster" stays nearly level as it comes up onto a plane, giving a smooth, controllable ride in a variety of sea conditions.



As a teen I had the high privilege of canoeing for several summers in Ontario, Canada. As a bowman, I paddled many miles with nothing better to do than occasionally ponder how one might be able to make a canoe by bending a piece of plywood. Back around 1975 I was living in Hawaii and decided to try to accomplish that task. After many failures, I finally hit upon how to do it. Here are some pictures of the prototype that I developed over the next few months.

I had learned that the fastest shape through the water was beer bottle round, so I first built the hull with a round (no self righting) transom. Without a great deal of surprise, I learned that there was really no way at all not to tip over. So I altered the transom to have a 2" "horizontal" span and 1" angled at about 130° outward, as shown by the white lines drawn to outline the transom shape in the first picture I took after creating the hull. But in the process of doing that I sacrificed about 4" of length so the half canoe ended up being only about 92" long. The finish was clear epoxy on the outside and epoxy containing  $\text{TiO}_2$  (titanium dioxide, mineral rutile) on the inside.



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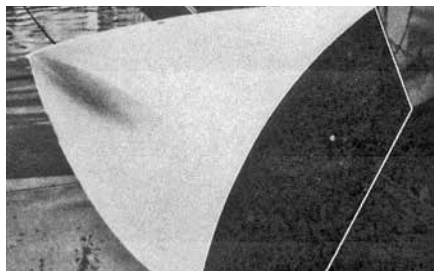
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## *Light Feather* A "Half Fast Canoe"

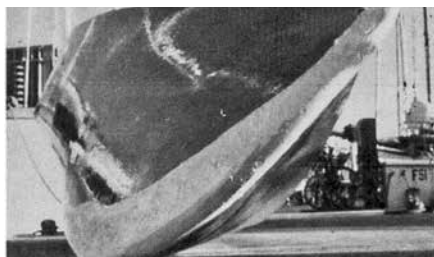
By Steve Langford



Friend Craig is next shown driving the canoe with a 2hp Seagull engine. Please note that there are no gunwales and nothing but epoxy holding the bow together.



The next picture was taken after I let a friend hold *Light Feather*. When he accidentally dropped it (the epoxy was slippery, especially when wet) on the concrete dock, the bow split open. So I built up several layers of Dynel cloth that was painted on with epoxy mixed together with glass microballoon filler and  $\text{TiO}_2$  pigment, that acted as an adhesive strip which nicely kept the bow from splitting again (even if I were to ram a concrete piling, I conjectured). Please note the convex curves and the fact that reflections that look like holes in the bottom are mere reflections but nicely display compound curves of the bending. Please also note that the prow is at right angles to the bottom of the transom and the bottom of the prow is lower than the transom.



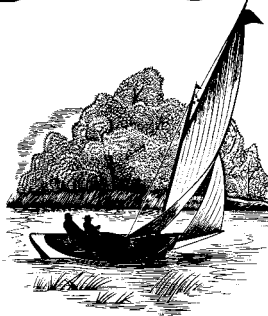
However, when I got airborne when motoring out through surf as I held an extension to the Seagull tiller and lay on my back with my head in the bow, I saw the top edges of the hull spread so widely that I feared I would submerge! That prompted me to add the gunwales seen in the next picture, in which I have loaded *Light Feather* with seven full cases of Dark San Miguel beer (a one time deal at \$2/case, I thought I would be able to carry no more than seven cases). This left the canoe with about 1" of freeboard which delighted young friend Matt, motoring his dinghy in circles around me. When I protested that he was going to sink the beer, he merrily said that then we could dive for it!



After a few years, after repainting the canoe with epoxy plus Al powder and bottom paint and letting her sit in the harbor between uses, it was time to give *Light Feather* to friend John-O (sic), who took this last picture of my beer belly. This short article leaves too many stories untold.



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It was fun rereading about my Monument River Wherry in the 25 year look back in the January *MAIB*, and since the story doesn't end there I thought maybe an update would be in order.

There have been four wherries built since that first boat in what could best be described as boat building by evolution with the basic concept intact but minor changes to each subsequent boat. Perhaps not the most cost effective or fastest way to improve a design, but with my limited ability it seemed like the safest way to proceed. Plus, there are many worse ways to spend a winter than building a new boat.

The ideas for improvements were conceived over hours of rowing each successive boat and seeing what might be made better. Generally new designs were lofted full size over the previous design in a different color pencil to help see the changes. But I did carve one additional half model to help visualize things when I evolved from two to three planks per side. I concede that all this design work could have been more effectively done sitting at a computer but I will leave that method to others.

The basic size and shape has stayed the same at around 17' in length and 43" of beam amidships. Each successive boat has been built lighter with version 5.0 weighing only 66lbs (the first boat weighed about 95lbs). I used 6mil okoume plywood for the bottom and 4mil for the side planks with 4oz cloth set in epoxy throughout. Eastern

## Monument River Wherry Boat Building by Evolution

By Jon Aborn

spruce was used for rails and miscellaneous pieces. I suppose I could build the next one a bit lighter, maybe 3mil sides, but for a boat built to last this may be about as light as I am comfortable with.

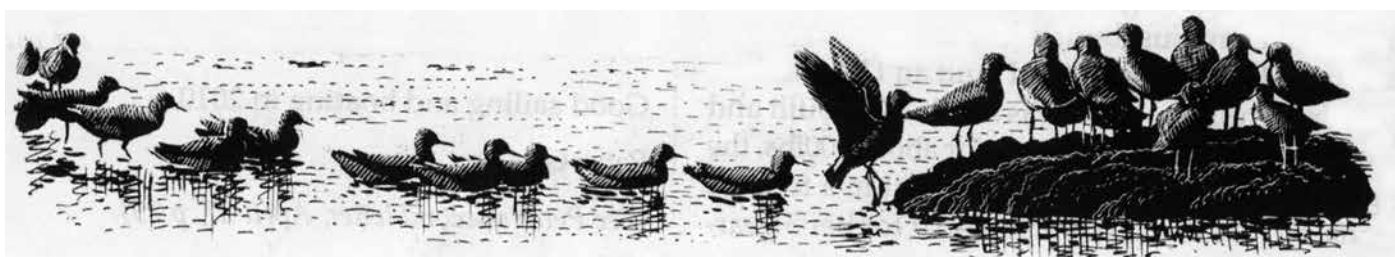
As an aside: There is a real lumberyard nearby that stocks good quality Eastern spruce framing lumber for the contractors. The big box stores sell junk so don't even think of going there. By picking through the stacks I have had good luck finding clear, straight grained pieces for my boats. Density/weight will vary so that has to be factored in and I never pay attention to length or width. If it is clear, straight and light I buy it, I can rip to size and scarf together for length to make anything work and it is so relatively cheap that if there is waste it is not a big deal. The cuts from the edges of the planks yield the nicest stock and almost a vertical grain cut. Eastern spruce is not particularly rot resistant so I always seal thoroughly with the epoxy. Versions 4.0 and 5.0 were built with a narrower bottom plank and three planks per side to more closely mimic a round sided boat. The garboard plank has less deadrise and on

5.0 the sheerstroke is lapstrake for the first time (all previous seams were taped seam). The aircraft Dacron used for the decks on the earlier boats has been replaced with 3mil plywood which looks real special when finished bright. On the new boats bow and stern stems have less rake, more plumb than the earlier boats. This gives a bit more waterline length and I have not yet had a problem with the bow burying and broaching in a following sea. And I think it looks better.

So what started out as a nice design 25+ years ago is a much better boat today. I have a dryer boat that rarely pounds when going to windward and it has greater initial stability and is more comfortable to row. This boat rows very easily and with a proper rower would be a contender in the Blackburn. When out rowing I find myself thinking less of how I might improve the next one and dwelling on how sweet this boat is. I guess you could call that success.

This design is available at no charge to anyone interested. A few have been built over the years by others and there is even a MRW in New Zealand. There is a table of offsets and a page of specifications, enough information so that anyone with any boat building experience could build one.

I can be contacted at [joneaborn@aol.com](mailto:joneaborn@aol.com) or Walter Baron at Old Wharf Dory Co in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, will build one at a very reasonable price. He has pictures on his website, [oldwharf.com/on-rowing](http://oldwharf.com/on-rowing). It has been a fun journey.





Regardless of what you might think about the perfect phone call which is destined to go down in the history books, the word "perfect" seems to be one which is thrown around carelessly more often than it is used accurately. I've resisted the urge to use it in ad copy for years and remember vividly my call from a West Coast buyer for my rare 1955 Chris Craft Cobra, the single seater with the gold fin, one of only 56 21-footers made. His first question was, "Is it perfect?"

There were a couple of small flaws in the spectacular restoration, things which were hard to notice but also relatively hard to correct without risking making them more noticeable. I had to start off by pointing them out, but by the end of our conversation I had recovered the tone enough to have him announce he'd like to buy it. He was sending a check for 10% via FedEx.

The next morning, before FedEx made their 10am delivery time, he called to say that the check would arrive but he had changed his mind and stopped payment on it. I asked him what the problem was and he said that he had bought another Cobra and that this one was perfect. I asked him if he had seen the actual boat and, of course, he hadn't. I knew who was selling the other boat and his level of commitment to accuracy but played the good loser and kept my mouth shut. I later sold my boat to someone else who was excited to have her, tiny flaws and all.

It got me thinking about other areas where the word "perfect" is commonly used. Perfect weather? Sunny and warm but not too hot and humid. Sort of bland really. The perfect crime? One where the perpetrator makes

## Perfect

By Boyd Mefferd

out great and doesn't get caught. Maybe that used to be a fairly low bar but now with cameras, DNA, GPS and other forensic tools, there are probably fewer perfect crimes.

The perfect war would be one where both armies took one look at what they were up against and both ran away, nobody killed and nobody wounded. I don't remember any of those in the history books except maybe the "Cold War."

We don't hear the word "perfect" much in sports. If both teams were playing perfect baseball the extra innings would go on forever. If nobody ever missed a basket and scored a three pointer every time the opening tip would probably determine the winner. Pretty dull. Being human, with the flaws and mistakes, defines sports and makes them exciting and the most skilled players still get paid millions, pretty good for someone who isn't perfect.

In some things perfection is absolutely necessary. Boeing's troubles were recently compounded when its Starliner rocket went a little too far and couldn't meet up with the space station. Luckily there was a provision for it to return to earth for another try. Friends who worked in aerospace in the late 1960s were pretty certain that the first moon landing would fail because all of the many systems would have to work perfectly. They were delighted, but mostly amazed, when it came off. Now with computers figuring

things out and robots making parts, errors are almost a thing of the past so that's the new normal, but 50 years ago it was all a lot more dicey.

In 1966 I got my first teaching job at Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, and heard about several faculty wives who tried to work in the office of *The Dairyman*, a publication obviously for the dairy industry, based in nearby Fort Atkinson. When typing correspondence for the various editors, no errors were tolerated and if one key was mis-struck the typist would have to start over again. These were some extremely intelligent women who lost patience with *The Dairyman* pretty quickly.

In boat restoration we really can't start over again every time there is a small error made. Sometimes a plank can be taken back out and done again, but generally people live with the idea that a complex process never comes off without some sort of hitch. In the Antique and Classic Boat Society we judge boats with a 100 point system and almost always find something to deduct points for. I say almost because in 1997, at the Southern New England Chapter Show where I was the Chief Judge and Master of Ceremonies, a 20' Ventnor runabout seemed to score 100 no matter how hard we looked for flaws. It was the first and, as I remember, the last time there was a perfect score.

In oriental rug weaving apparently even the best weavers put in some sort of intentional mistake in the pattern because "only Allah is perfect." We don't know how much company Allah has today but it's something to think about.



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# Methods for Epoxy Coating on All Sides

Reprinted from *Epoxyworks* - Newsletter of Gougeon Brothers

Need to epoxy coat something on all sides? Long ago, retired Tech Advisor Captain James R. Watson created these handy instructions (and charming sketches) of his favorite tricks for epoxy coating on all sides of an item.

## Coating on All Sides

"Methods for coating all/both surfaces" the sketch is titled, with the clarification of purpose "To speed the project" added as a subheading. And then the important note: "Yet prevents inadvertent adhesion," which is always a concern when working with a super strong epoxy like WEST SYSTEM.

The sketch on the upper left depicts a flat panel hanging by a bit of twine attached to a hook that has been screwed into the narrow end. The image next to that shows a similar flat panel, this one supported by finish nails on the bottom side. Nearby are some pyramids of indeterminate origin and material, presumably for use in support flat panels where finish nails just won't do the trick.

At the top right, a frame hangs from an S-hook. Beneath it is the clarification "Non stick surfaces: polyethylene, not wax paper."

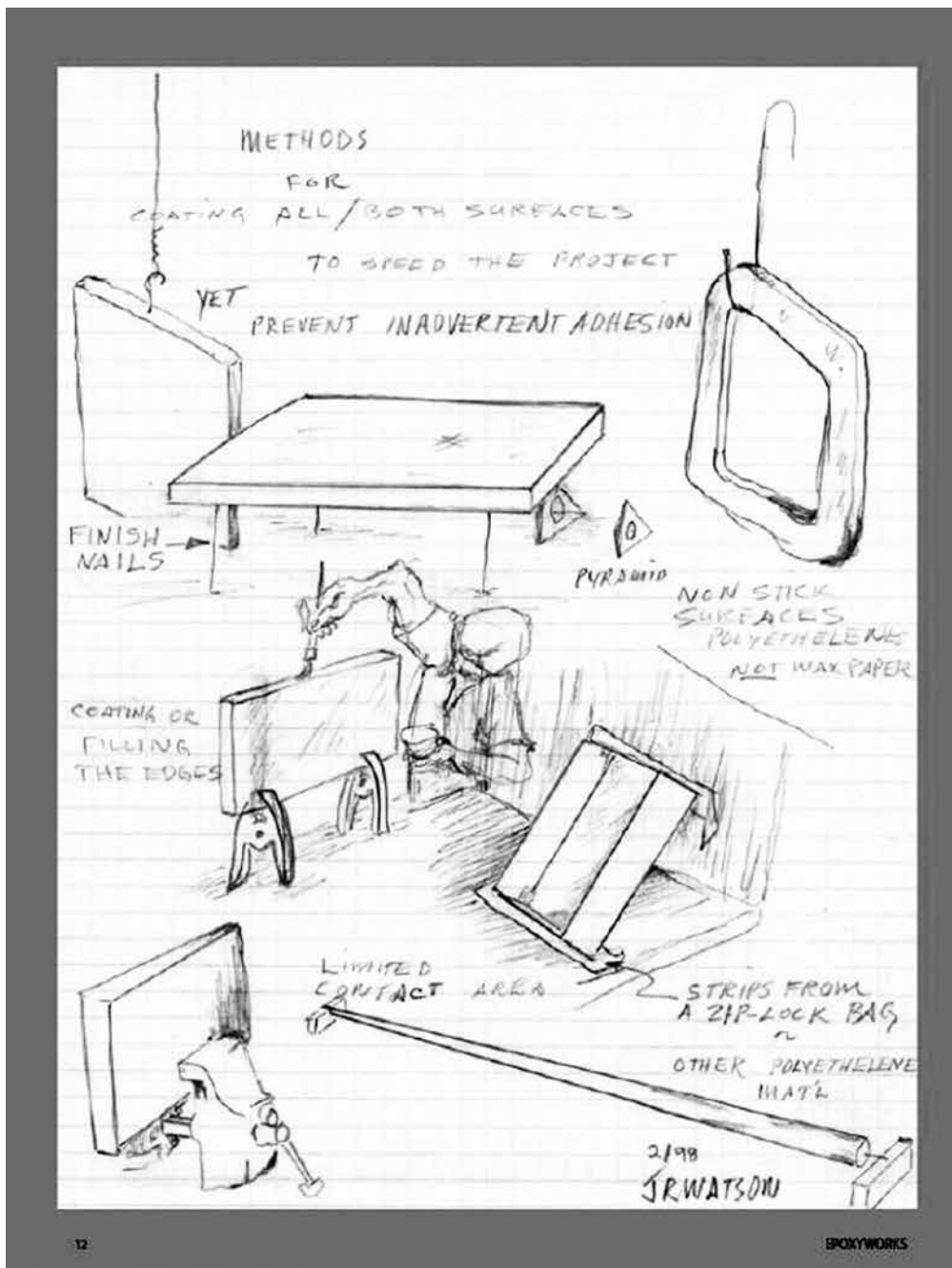
"Coating or filling the edges" is the caption for an image of another flat panel, this one raised up and supported by a pair of alligator clamps as a human figure with a very interesting arm (possibly a severely arthritic elbow?) uses a paintbrush to apply epoxy along the narrow edge of the panel.

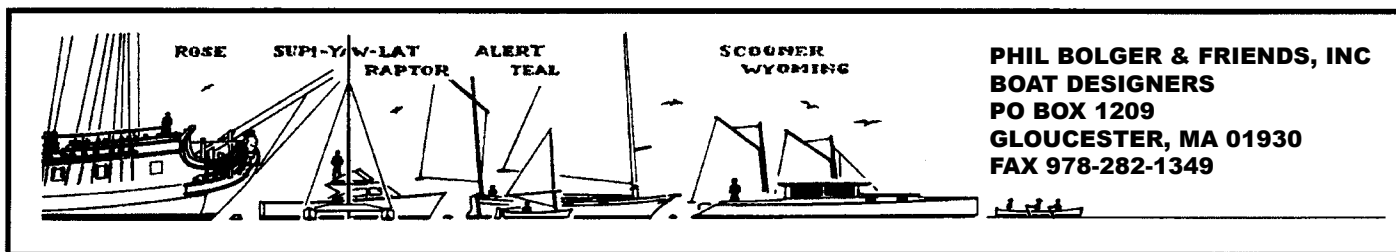
Just to the right of the human figure, an open, epoxied box leans against a wall which, along with the floor, has "strips from a ZipLoc® bag or other polyethylene material" preventing the epoxied box from adhering to the floor and wall.

Below the epoxied box, a dowel is depicted. Finish nails are hammered into each end and these are resting on small chocks to keep the dowel suspended for seamless epoxy application and curing without inadvertently sticking to anything.

The final sketch, which is in the lower left corner, shows another flat panel. This one is held securely upright by a bench vise. Presumably there is some mold release agent such as automotive wax applied to the vise to prevent the epoxied panel from adhering to it.

The Coating on All Sides sketch is signed and dated at the bottom: 2/98, J.R. Watson. Good old Captain Watson. We miss him! ED, *Epoxyworks*





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## Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

Design Column #544 in *MAIB*

### Design #417 Skimmer Planing Utility 8'x4'x2-25hp (Light)

Yes, another square boat! In fact, the same overall hull footprint as Design #614 Flying Cloud of the December 2018 issue of *MAIB*, the same hull we safely took frost biting amidst drifting saltwater skim ice in the March 2019 issue. And, of course, even squarer than unapologetically simple Design #538/539 Shoebox measuring 5'6"x3'3" in last issue. And like those, something to consider building before the 2020 boating season.

Skimmer has been called a poor man's Whaler but, of course, the simple flat bottom boat type is as old as humans, here in plywood rather than cross planking, but then not even a hint of flare in her sides nor any curvature in her topsides looking down on her. Only the age of lightweight power allowed such a plain hull shape that only has a modest rise of the bottom towards the bow transom with the planing hull surface running straight aft, square in every way as square can be, a most effective way to plane a hull assuming you have adequate power.

Designed by Phil in 1982, Skimmer is an absolutely rigorous exercise in minimalism, requiring just two sheets of 1/4" plywood along with some dimensional lumber, and then a choice of epoxy, likely some fiberglass or just sealant and nails, all depending upon preferences, projected use, finish aspirations.

She carries built-in foam buoyancy under her thwart to keep her afloat. But in lieu of her single ply topsides I'd be tempted to also epoxy laminate the topsides up in a sandwich of 1/8" ply plus 2" of foam plus 1/8" ply along with a layer of 6-10oz glass cloth on the outside for good wear resistance, all for a nice buoyancy ring around her.

Early in our time together, Phil and I laminated up a 1'x8'x1/8"ply with 2" foam and another 1/8" ply plus a glass layer on one side, all in epoxy, and then had at it with a sledge hammer on both sides which

just dented things even on the soft side. The glassed side needed the wedge end of the hammer to penetrate the glass some. The piece otherwise just jumped around under this abuse.

We finally ruined it by raising one end 6" up, with fiberglass facing down, and then backing a 5,500lb Chevy rear wheel up that slope. The bottom layer reinforced with glass in tension just bent more and more, but the top ply piece eventually sheared over each other in compression, thus promptly compressing the foam below until it broke. Dramatic and a good show for the strength of such a plain, easy to build laminate. Hence the idea of integrating that option into this hull as well for lightweight stiffness and permanently built-in foam buoyancy.

By design, Skimmer's bottom is reinforced with the three outside skeg runners that also appear to do wonders to allow her to track straight going slow and fast. Beyond that structure, some may consider here as well adding a 2" foam layer and 1/8" ply layer inside the bottom to increase her weight mildly but significantly boost her buoyancy further. By the time we sum up the areas of sides and bottom, cubic feet of permanently built-in foam should add up to a really comfortable level. We might then even be able to then have a removable thwart when not running (!) to allow two folks stretching out side by side in the sun or under the stars. Ideas, options and geometries to pursue.

The motor mount construction should get beefier as we go up in her power and the weight of the motor, even just 10hp, can generate significant stresses on a hull otherwise built out of 1/4" plywood.

This boat was built fast and furiously in the summer of 2019 in anticipation of youngsters arriving for a good time along the protected shores of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. Not much interest here in the finest of finish or exquisite color coordination, something perhaps to consider later, after the kids were through with her at the end of the summer.

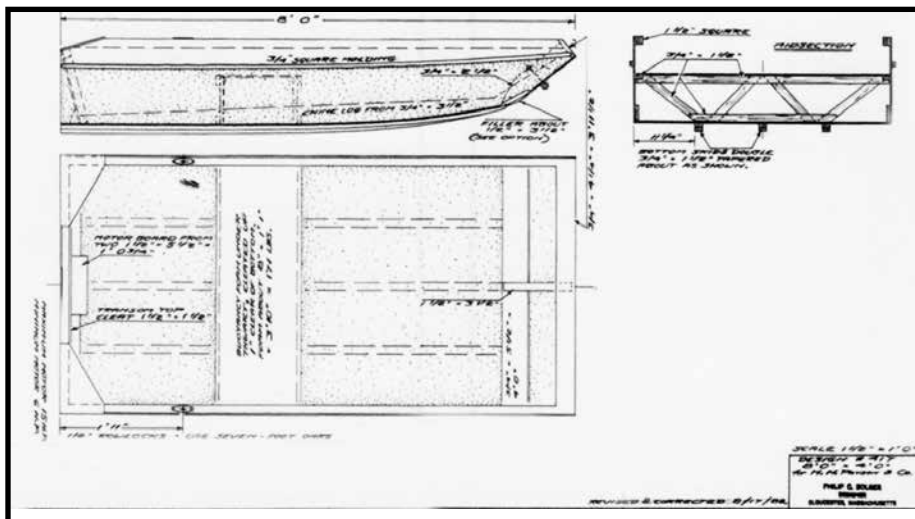
A healthy but heavier 10hp four stroke proved to make her impressively fast until the mild motor board indicated distress, prompting a quick insertion of a piece of 10"x2". The plan now is to look for a lightweight 8-10er. Available at this time in early winter was just that ancient, mild mannered 4.5hp with the quaint Art Deco styling of the motor cover fashionable quite a while back, with modest power probably a wise choice in waters with first ice sheets. Had it been 6hp, we would have seen her plane with man and dog, perhaps just a question of putting a bigger carb on that motor.

That light 8hp or 10hp with an alternator even for lights would make all this a nice working rig to do all sorts of silly and serious things with. And yes, of course, we can stand up in her on her 4' wide bottom. Just bear in mind how light she is as she might just move out from underneath no matter how broad-legged the stance.

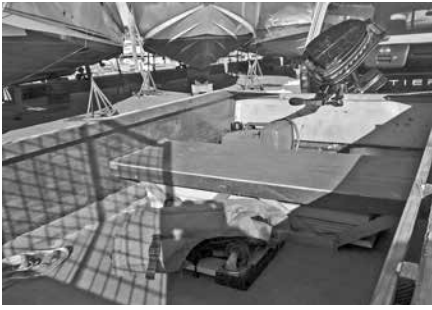


1. Like our 8'x4' Flying Cloud, this Skimmer gets hauled around on a utility trailer.

2. Skimmer's bow transom, a combination of epoxy and construction adhesive with epoxy deemed the better choice after all.







3. Looking towards her thwart and that reinforced transom.



4. A no nonsense stern view between the transom reinforcements, the flip-up ramp wheels, corner braces and that older 4.5hp two stroker.



5. Unlike my rough and ready approach of dipping my utility trailer into saltwater to launch ballasted Flying Cloud with a total weight of some 330lbs, here owner builder Seth can avoid marinating his trailer carrying a much lighter Skimmer by staying well above the waterline.



6. With those transom wheels down to support outboard, tank and the rear half of the hull, lifting the bow allows rolling her down the trailer ramp.

7. Without any traffic at that ramp, under clear bright sky and with just a gently rising tide but no waves, this sort of launch sure is one very doable sensible approach. We just leave her sitting on wheels and skegs to move the rig up into parking.



8. Safety for the indispensable crew.



9. Crew promptly does the natural things and tests the water with that slight skim ice on top. Then an elegant leap into the boat to make sure it is wet on both bottom and top.



10. Wheels up, motor starts promptly and soon this cliché image of shared responsibilities afloat at this early winter noontime.



11. Once warmed up, the motor gets full throttle away from the marina floats. But she won't quite plane out with that 4.5hp power.

12. More posing! Very effective act! Good display for those landlubbers out for a walk.



13. Hands off her tiller to see her track straight and to explore whether shifting of weight helps noticeably, it did not.



14. Trusty crew is not so certain whether not coming along for boat duties is such a good idea. But this once for testing's sake, curiosity about maximum speed suggests shedding a few pounds.



15. Perhaps a smidgeon faster with just that tall lean builder, tracking straight hands off.



16. The end of one modest winter outing test and photo shoot, a few hours of boating while winter sure has set in.



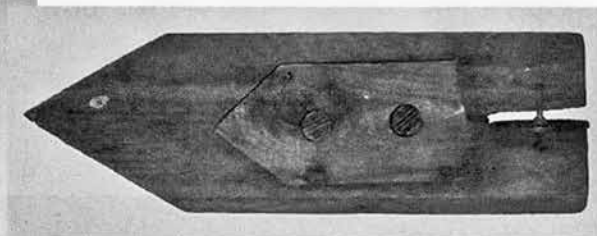
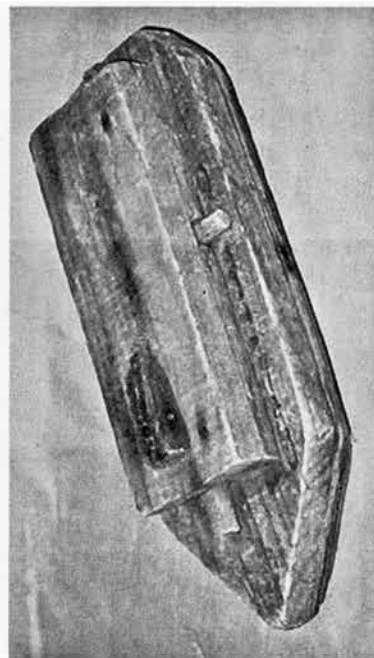
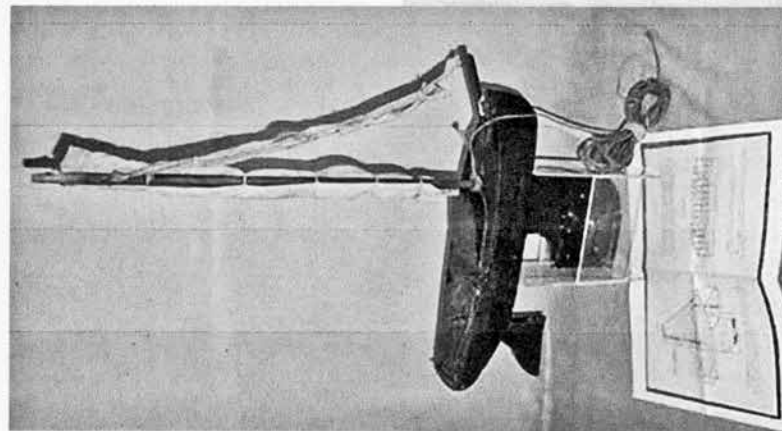
17. Santa out on the big tourist boat may be exciting the kids while we follow an invitation to hot chocolate aboard a toasty Crocker Tancook Whaler in her winter berth a few floats over.

Plans for Design #417 Skimmer remain available at \$35 to build one boat, mailed in an envelope by priority mail. If you are new to this, it is suggested that you bone up the building process by getting one of the standard Harold H. Payson texts with him showing you how he built a range of Phil Bolger's designs.



I, your humble Sec/Ed servant, not having picked up my 1910 Vesper Canoe project in a while, brought a sample of a basic warship. I call these "Daddy Boats" and used to have a whole bunch. They are charming in their simplicity. Almost abstract, picked up on the byways of New England, but one can only store and display so much stuff. As kids, a stick in a puddle was a boat, and started most of us on the path to modeling.

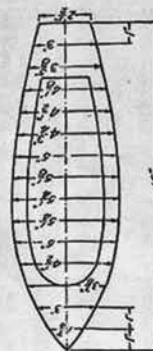
Here are a couple others. The sailboat, called "A Racer" was originally published in 1928, in Junior Home Magazine, reprinted in 1998 in a book titled "Boy Craft". The sternwheeler is another free-style, minimalist floor toy.



BOATS

The keel, which is a piece of tin with one edge tacked to the bottom of the boat and the other edge weighted with lead, is necessary to prevent the boat from tipping. To provide a place for tacking, fold the tin 5" from the edge to an angle of 90 degrees. The keel may be weighted by riveting strips of lead to it or setting in a mold and pouring hot lead to fill the mold.

A RACER

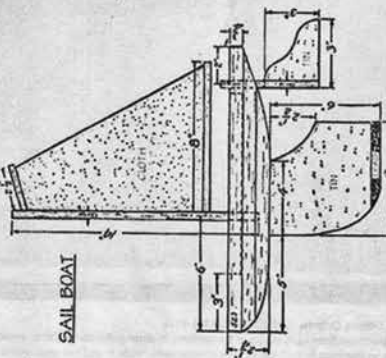


A rudder is required to guide the boat in the desired course. The tin is tacked in a slot sawed in the wooden rudder shaft.

The sail shown is of simple construction to be made by small boys. Older boys should experiment and add as much sail as the ship will carry.

BOATS

SAIL BOAT



The Sail Boat may be carved from a solid piece of pine, or built up of three three-quarter inch boards. The plume, gouge, spoke, shaver, saw, brace, bit, and chisel will be found the most convenient tools to use in carving the boat to form.

Of coming interest to those who navigate in port environments is the idea of an autonomous underwater dredger which moves along the bottom in shallow areas and puts the dredged spoil into an internal hopper. It would come to the surface for maintenance, battery charging and unloading the hopper. No information yet on how those on the surface will know where the dredger is working. For more information on this device, browse “autonomous underwater maintenance dredger” on the Web.

Does your forward hatch have the hinges fore or aft of the actual hole in the deck? This can be of critical concern if the hatchcover latch fails in rough weather. Many years ago my backdoor neighbor and his wife came back from one of their weekend cruises with the tale of the forward hatch latches failing, the hatch opening (it had hinges on the aft side) and water coming into the boat every time the bow went under while they were anchored offshore in a bad storm. Even after he secured (as best he could) the hatch cover, they spent much of the night, until the storm passed, bailing out the boat. Although it is inconvenient in some instances, if the hinges on the hatch are forward, it will probably not get ripped open by heavy seas.

According to information in various boating related publications, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is planning to discontinue the production of paper charts by 2025, although print on demand will still be available. While those who rely on electronic navigation tools will probably not miss these charts (unless their electronics fail), who will store and provide old electronic charts to show what was the situation in an area at an earlier date? It is sometimes very useful to pull out the old chart and compare the information with what is in being now.



Before I retired I used both “obsolete” topographic maps and NOAA charts to see what had previously been there. The “old” charts and maps were also useful when there was no alternative information. At one point I retrieved road maps of Cuba from FSU’s Strozier Library map collection to the provide information requested. I had a 1950s Texaco map, a 1970s CIA map and a 1980s Russian map showing the road network in Cuba. This information was not available in any electronic form.

Another time, I retrieved a topographic map of Haiti and scanned it to produce an electronic version that showed the terrain. The purpose of this project was to find the high places to set up radio towers. One time a branch of my department was caught in a land use dispute and the GIS Unit was called on to provide historical mapping of the area.

Back to Strozier’s map collection for topographic maps and then to Florida Department of Transportation and their air photo collection. We scanned the maps and provided an historical overlay display for the area that showed the mapped development. The air photos brought the topo maps “up to date” for the purpose. Without the old topo maps, the progressive land use of the area prior to the DOT mapping project for “current” time, the project would not have possible. Now, with all the satellite mapping capability available, current information is

accessible any time you need it. But what was will probably soon not be accessible unless the current image is saved to an accessible archive somewhere on the Web.

My article in the October 2019 issue of *MAIB* mentioned applying a “leather” glue to hold the pot metal rear view mirror back together in September. In December 2019 the glue failed for some reason and I have used the “leather” glue once again. We shall see what happens.

Three minutes may seem like a lot of time but it was all the people on the sailboat, reportedly, had between the time it rolled, filled and sank during a storm. They were left in the water (wearing their PFDs) with only the dinghy (which had broken free when the boat rolled) for buoyancy. They climbed into the dinghy and spent a number of hours floating in the Atlantic before they were spotted by a grouper fisherman and rescued. No cell phone, no VHF, no flares, nothing. It was one of those cases of pure luck that led to their survival. I think the moral here is that one needs to carry some form of waterproof or resistant communications device on one’s person when onboard a boat, just in case.

Do you carry a knife? Is it accessible when needed? Can you get it out of the pocket and open it one handed? These questions came to mind when I read about a sailor who needed to cut a line in an emergency. If you answered all of the above positively, will the knife actually cut any of the lines on your boat? If yes, how many “cuts” do you need to actually cut the line apart? I carried my rigger’s knife in the outside right pocket of my foul weather jacket, when such a jacket was needed. Otherwise, it rested in the right rear pocket of my pants. Granted, it took two hands to open the rigger’s knife, but a sheath knife did not fasten well to the outside of the foul weather jacket and under the jacket it was not that accessible.

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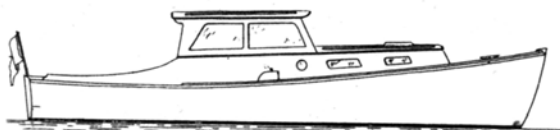
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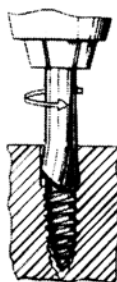
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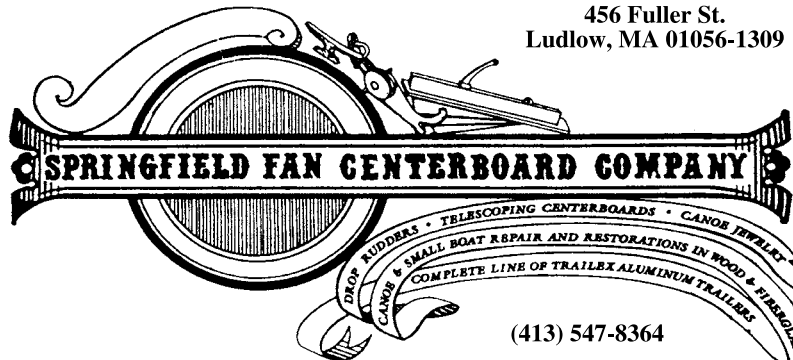
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My Vermont Fishing Dory arrived yesterday. Although anxious for its arrival, the day had overcome me, I was on a business call and stressed when the doorbell rang with Justin and Ian and their trailer full of boats outside. "WOW" was all I could say.

I had never seen one in person. I had looked at pictures 100's of times this long winter, yet was not prepared for the shocking difference of seeing one in person. I think the second words out of my mouth were "If I seen this in person last fall, I would have just purchased it then and there".

I would like to personally thank Justin and Ian. As brother's in blood and business I hope they have fond memories of their road trip through the midwest, during one of the coldest winters in decades. Soon the ice and snow will melt and I will be fly fishing from my V.F.D.

A line from the Pixar movie "Up!" comes to mind, "I just met you and I already love you." That is how I feel each time I venture into my garage with a cup of coffee and spend a little time with the my new boat.....spring and open water are just around the corner. It's so nice to see that a company such as this, with design and workmanship at such high levels, still exists in the U.S. of A. Safe travels, Ian and Justin Bill Ingersoll

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